





S.M.S. EMDEN

DISPLACEMENT: 3,600 tons. SIZE: Length 387 feet, width 46 feet approx.

POWER: Coal-fired reciprocating engines producing 13,500 h.p.

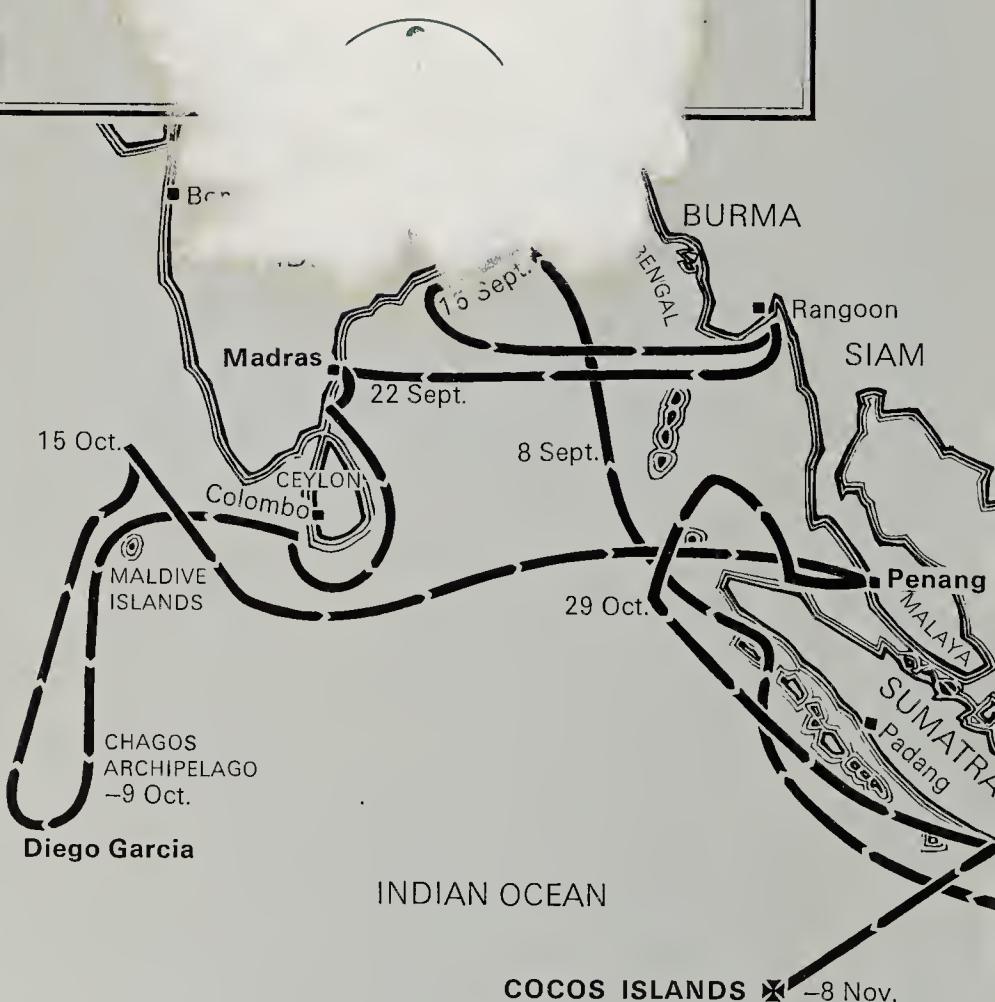
SPEED: 24.5 knots (design speed), *actual* top speed 29 knots approx.

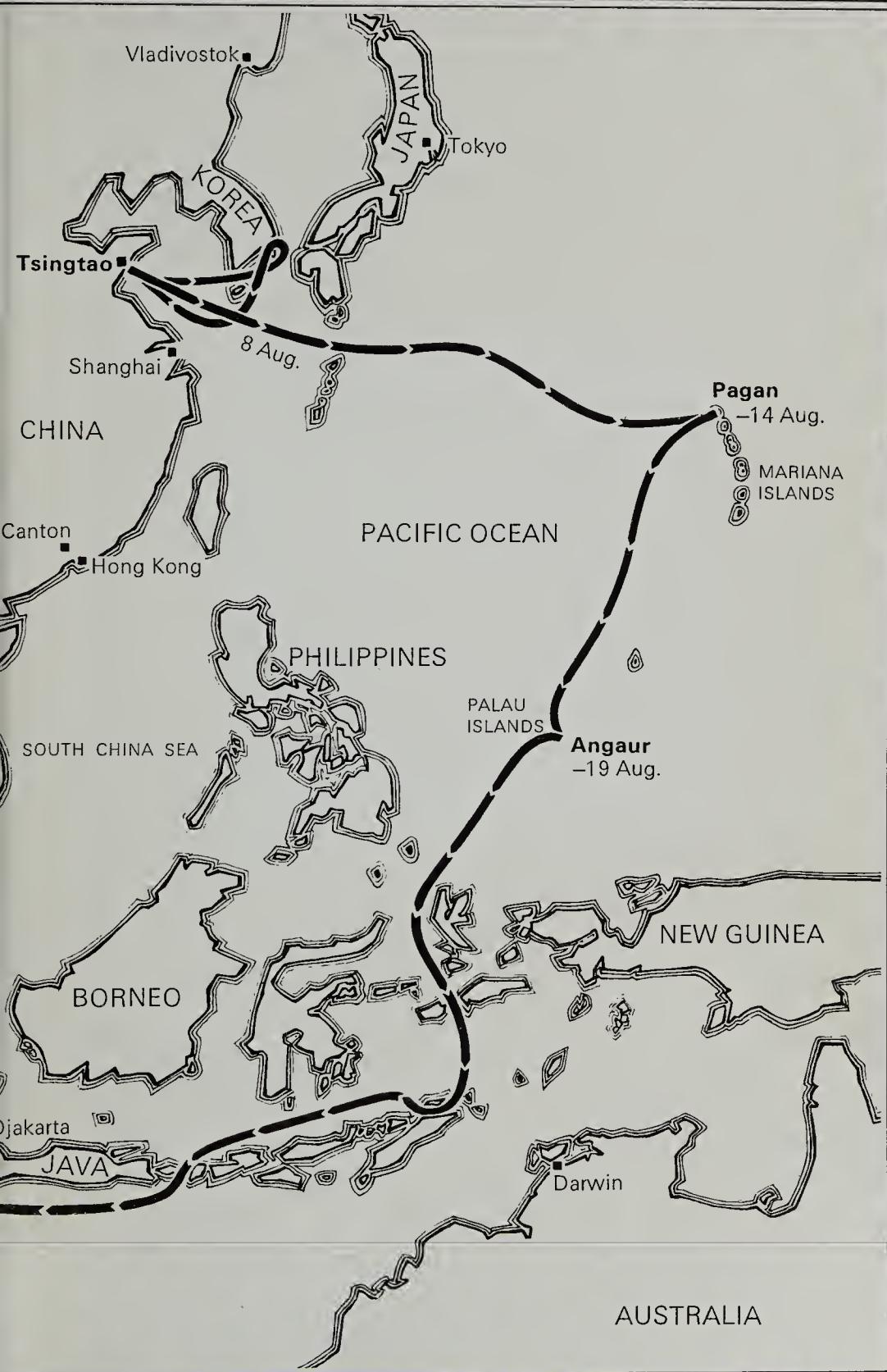
ARMAMENT: Guns ten 4.1-inch, eight 5 pounders, four machine-guns,

(broadside) [redacted]

CREW

COGNOSCO





GUNS IN PARADISE

THE SAGA OF
THE CRUISER EMDEN



S.M.S. Emden Coat of Arms
Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt





GUNS IN PARADISE

THE SAGA OF
THE CRUISER *EMDEN*

FRED McCLEMENT

McCLELLAND AND STEWART LIMITED
TORONTO/MONTREAL

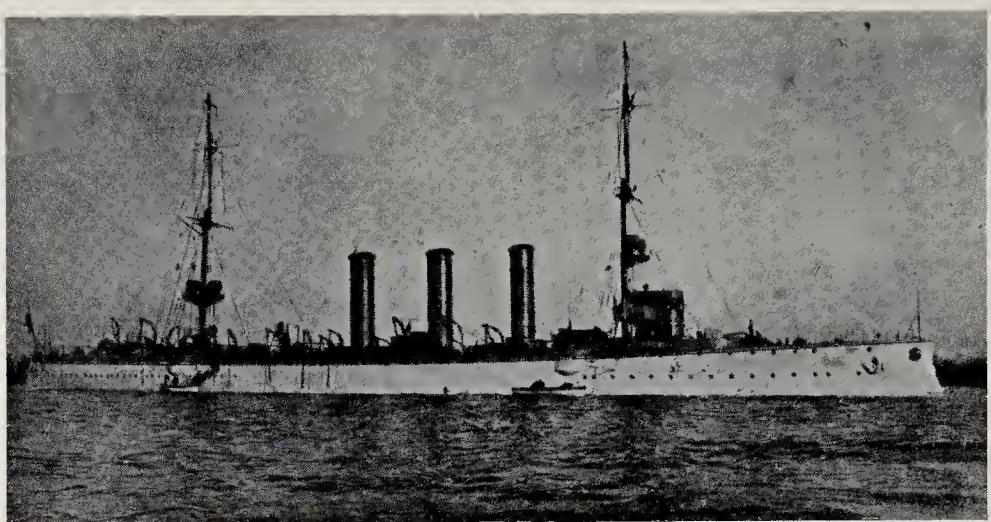


TOP LEFT
The German light cruiser *Emden*
Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt

TOP RIGHT
Kapitan Karl von Müller

BOTTOM LEFT
His Majesty's Australian Ship *Sydney*
under a full head of steam
Australian War Memorial

BOTTOM RIGHT
Commodore J.C.T. Glossop



U.S.S. TELAS





127993



Copyright © 1968 by Fred McClement
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Books by Fred McClement
Anvil of the Gods
It Doesn't Matter Where You Sit

Endpaper maps drawn by Steve Gill

The Canadian Publishers
McClelland and Stewart Limited,
25 Hollinger Road, Toronto, 16

Printed and bound by
Billing & Sons Limited, England

TOP LEFT
The mighty cruiser *Scharnhorst*,
Flag Ship of Von Spee's
Far Eastern Squadron
U.S. Navy

TOP CENTRE
The German Vice-Admiral,
Count Graf von Spee

TOP RIGHT
Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock,
Commander of the South Atlantic
Squadron; defeated at Coronel

BOTTOM LEFT
Admiral von Spee is welcomed at
Valparaiso, immediately after his
victory over the English at Coronel
U.S. Navy





CONTENTS

Foreword 17
Preface/Acknowledgements 19

- 1 The First Move 25
- 2 The First Capture 37
- 3 To Pagan for Orders 44
- 4 The Naval Plans of 1914 52
- 5 The Long Trip to Bengal 62
- 6 Bengal Roulette 73
- 7 Churchill and the Anzacs 81
- 8 The Captures Continue 89
- 9 The Attack on Madras 97
- 10 *H.M.S. Yarmouth* Strikes 109
- 11 The Attack on Penang 118
- 12 The Anzac Convoy Sails 129
- 13 Coronel and After 135

continued overleaf

TOP LEFT

Kapitan von Mücke, with some of the group stranded on Direction Island, watching the death struggle of their cruiser *Emden*
Imperial War Museum

BOTTOM LEFT

The crew of the *Sydney*, immediately after their world-famous victory in the Indian ocean
Australian War Memorial

TOP RIGHT

Superintendent D'Arcy Farrant and telegraph operator La Nauze stand in the wreckage of their dynamited radio mast on Direction Island
Imperial War Museum





CONTENTS *continued*

- 14 The Cocos Islands 142
- 15 The Trap 152
- 16 *H.M.A.S. Sydney Investigates* 159
- 17 The Death of the *Emden* 168
- 18 The Bloody Conclusion 191
- 19 The Escape 201
- 20 Aftermath 219
- 21 The Voyage of the *Ayesha* 229
- 22 Arabian Odyssey 243
- 23 The Happy Return 253
- 24 Finale 264

Postscript 269
Es Ist Vorbei 270

Front End-Paper:
Voyages of the cruiser Emden
Back End-Paper:
Direction Is. and battle diagram

FAR LEFT

Kapitan Karl von Müller
Militärgeschichtliches Forschungamt

CENTRE

Commodore J.C.T. Glossop, C.B., R.N.,
Captain of the cruiser *Sydney*
(From the portrait by
James Quinn, R.O.I., R.P.)
Australian War Memorial

TOP RIGHT

First Lord of the Admiralty:
Mr. Winston Churchill, in the uniform
of his office
Miller Services Limited





EXTRACT FROM THE LOG OF H.M.A.S. SYDNEY

9th November 1914 Ships in Company

Melbourne to Sydney (signal: Flags)
Time 7.00—Raise steam for full speed and report when ready

Sydney to Melbourne (S.L.) 7.10—
Following received Minotaur from NGH strange warship at entrance

9.19—smoke on Starbd. bow
9.20—Enemy in sight

Sydney to Cruiser 9.23—Challenge
9.39—Opened fire

Sydney to Melbourne (WT)
9.42—(Code) Enemy in sight
9.58—Am engaging enemy chasing north

10.48—Am engaging enemy briskly
11.20—Enemy beached herself to save sinking

11.30—Enemy beached to save herself sinking am pursuing her merchant collier

Sydney to Minotaur (WT) 11.40—
Enemy beached and done for

Sydney to Melb. (WT) 11.45—
Casualties 2 dead and 5 seriously wounded 8 wounded

continued overleaf

LEFT

The broken *Emden* on the lonely reef
U.S. Navy

TOP RIGHT

The gloomy prison of Verdala, Malta, where von Müller was confined
Miller Services





R.A.N. "Sydney",
9th November 1914.

Sir,

I have the honour to request that in the name of humanity you now surrender your ship to me. In order to show how much I appreciate your gallantry, I will recapitulate the position.

- (1) You are ashore, 3 funnels and 1 mast down and most guns disabled.
- (2) You cannot leave this island, and my ship is intact.

In the event of your surrendering in which I venture to remind you is no disgrace but rather your misfortune, I will endeavour to do all I can for your sick and wounded and take them to a hospital.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

John H. Glossop
Captain.

The Captain,
H.I.G.M.S. "Emden".



Sydney to Steamer (Flags)

11.53—Stop engines

12.08—Strike your colours

12.24—Send boat

Collier SS Buresk to Sydney (Flags)

12.40—Ship sinking

Sydney to Collier (Flags) 12.43—

Can you save ship

Collier to Sydney (Flags) 12.45—

Ship is filling fast

Sydney to Collier (Flags) 12.50—

Bring off our own people & English. Tell them to man their own boats. Reply: Yes some English speaking people, they are manning boats.

Collier to Sydney (Flags) 12.50—

Am sending all Chinese crew

Sydney to Collier (Flags) 12.53—

Report how she is filling can you do nothing for it. Reply: They have opened valves and damaged them so they cannot be closed.

continued overleaf

FAR LEFT

The incredible destruction on the foredeck of the *Emden* after her battle with the *Sydney* U.S. Navy

CENTRE

The letter which was to become essential evidence (see page 200)
Imperial War Museum

TOP RIGHT

Captain Glossop and some of the officers of the cruiser *Sydney*
Australian War Memorial





Collier to Sydney (Flags) 12.55-
Please send over Engineer Officer

Sydney to Collier (Flags) 12.57-
Send cutter back with someone who
can give us all details

Collier to Sydney (Flags) 1.08-
Ship is taking a list

Sydney to Collier (Flags) 1.20-
Abandon ship

Sydney to Emden (Flags) 4.10-
Will you surrender

Emden to Sydney (Morse) 4.15-
What signal no signal books

Sydney to Emden (Morse)
4.20—Do you surrender
(Not acknowledged)
4.25—Have you received my signal
(Not acknowledged)

4.30—Opened fire
4.35—Ceased fire on enemy hauling
down colours

Emden to Sydney (Morse) 4.45-
No signal books

LEFT

The *Emden*'s landing crew prepare
to escape in the schooner *Ayesha*,
which can be seen in the background
Imperial War Museum

TOP RIGHT

Von Mücke and his men arrive
in Constantinople
Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt

OVERLEAF

Es Ist Vorbei
Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt

THE
SAGA
OF
THE
CRUISER
EMDEN

Guns in Paradise



Foreword

The *Emden* was a German light cruiser which became a lone commerce raider in the Far East during the early months of the First World War, when Japanese belligerence was making it impossible for the powerful German Far Eastern Squadron to operate as a unit in the China Seas or the South Pacific.

The *Emden* became world-famous because of the extraordinary scope of her operations, which took place over thousands of square miles of ocean. In fact, so scattered were her forays that during one period in October, 1914, the British were almost inclined to believe that the Germans had thirty-two ships named *Emden* on the loose in the Far East, as a deliberate means of confusing Admiralty plans to sink her.

This will-o'-the-wisp elusiveness, and the astonishing boldness of her exploits was to make her commander, Karl von Müller, the first hero of the war. He also won world-wide admiration for his gallant treatment of his prisoners. He never sank a merchant ship without warning, and without first removing all passengers and crew. With enemy warships he was naturally more ruthless.

The story of the little *Emden* and her courageous crew has been told and re-told some two-score times in German- and English-speaking countries. Unfortunately, most previously published books repeated the errors and omissions of those which were hastily rushed into print after the First World War ended. After ten years' research into the subject I have attempted, once and for all, to set the facts straight.

One very important aspect of the *Emden*'s stormy career, which was lost in earlier accounts, was her almost incredible impact on the Allied war effort. As a result of her exploits, needed troops, horses, foodstuffs and ammunition were held up for weeks and months in ports from Rangoon to Sydney – from Calcutta to Singapore and beyond – while in Europe, England and France were begging for help against the German juggernaut.

Australia and New Zealand, in particular, had promised to provide 30,000 troops by the end of August, 1914, but as a result of the fears roused by the *Emden*'s raids their governments flatly refused to allow the contingents to sail. The ties of Empire became so strained that at one point Australia threatened to reconsider its allegiance to the Crown, once hostilities were over.

It took all the diplomatic skill of Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, to placate the Anzacs. And it took all his naval strategy to bring the *Emden* and other German raiders to bay, and then only after a dreadful toll had been taken in life and shipping.

The *Emden*'s dramatic cruise, without harbour or friend, was to end in a bloodbath on a lonely Indian Ocean atoll, once described by naturalist Charles Darwin as a "paradise on earth." It was hardly the place for the death of such a gallant ship.

The drama of her final hours was further underlined by the fact that thirty members of her crew, stranded on the island, were forced to watch their ship's destruction in helpless agony.

Afterwards, determined not to be taken prisoner, they managed to escape on an ancient, barely sea-worthy schooner. Their extraordinary adventures on the high seas and in the hostile deserts of Arabia during their long and perilous odyssey back to Germany form a fitting conclusion to an incredible story.

Today, the restless seas surge over the grave of the *Emden* of which there is no longer a trace. But her exploits live on in the annals of the sea.

Fred McClement

Preface and Acknowledgements

During the First World War, it was the decision of the German High Command to relegate its navy to a secondary position in its ambitious programme to subjugate France, Russia, and any other European nation willing to test its strength. As a result, the powerful Home Fleet was confined to the North Sea waters adjacent to the German coast, and especially to that area which controlled the entrance to the Baltic. Its purpose was to prevent the establishment of a sea union with Russia.

Had Germany made a different strategic decision, the course of the war might have changed dramatically. If the German Fleet had been placed strategically along the coasts of Holland and Belgium, and off the French channel ports (thus protecting the right flank of the infantry on its wheel through Belgium to France), the outcome of hostilities could have been very different. It could indeed have resulted in victory for Germany.

But no such action was ever taken. The great fleet only ventured forth on one occasion – May 31, 1916 – when, under Admiral Reinhard Scheer, it clashed with the British Grand Fleet off Jutland. And although it sank more ships and caused the loss of more lives than it suffered itself, it then returned to its home waters, never to emerge again. Thus, the British remained in control of the seas.

When hostilities first broke out, the only German squadron on the high seas was the Far Eastern Squadron. It was under the command of Vice-Admiral Graf von Spee, and its home

port was the German-leased city of Tsingtao, perched on the southernmost peninsula of China's Shantung province.

As has already been mentioned, Germany's master-plan for conquest in Europe was to fight a holding action against Russia in the East, while smashing France quickly and decisively in the West.

The plan in Asia was for von Spee's Far Eastern Squadron to attack the French colony of Cochin China with a force of marines from Tsingtao. Little or no opposition was expected. The French had only two destroyers and some gunboats in eastern waters, and these would be quickly erased by the powerful guns of von Spee's ships. It was predicted that the French colonial forces would collapse under the German marine attacks. Once the fall of Cochin China had been accomplished, the marines and the Far Eastern Squadron could then proceed to take the other French possessions in the East Indies, and the war would be ended abroad as well as at home.

But the plan had two basic weaknesses. It could be successful only if both the British and the Japanese kept out of the war. Von Spee was not worried about British strength in the Far East, since he could outrun and outgun the entire British China Squadron. But the Japanese Fleet posed a far more serious problem. When Germany mobilized its forces in Europe, Japan immediately began to harass German nationals in Tokyo and other cities. Further to this, she ordered Germany out of the East altogether — and particularly out of her base in China — a strategic foothold on the Asian mainland which Japan had coveted for a long time.

And on the eve of world conflict England was also turning against Germany. For one thing, she was ready to fight to maintain the neutrality of Belgium — a decision which the Germans had not believed she would make. However, when hostilities finally broke out, and the British Admiralty assumed control of all the Empire's warships, its remarkably short-sighted policy in the Far East was, in the early months of the war, to play straight into German hands.

In the early days of the war, von Spee was isolated by the hostile forces in the South Pacific. He was free to run and hide — and even to "twist the lion's tail" — but only as long as his coal

supplies held out (and his cruisers consumed prodigious amounts of fuel). He therefore came to the realistic conclusion that his survival depended on getting out of the Far East as quickly as possible, abandoning the German island possessions and the great port of Pagan, which had been secretly outfitted to supply his cruisers' needs. He planned to steer for the west coast of South America, where Germany had friends, and where coal supplies could be ordered from San Francisco.

If, by this time, the war was not ended – and like all Germans he firmly expected it would be – he planned to make a dash up the Atlantic, head around the British Isles and rejoin the Home Fleet. In preparation for any possible encounter with the enemy it was necessary for him to keep the entire strength of his mighty cruiser squadron with him. However, because of the great caches of coal and supplies carried by merchantmen who were scattered throughout the East Indies, he decided to release the light cruiser, *Emden*, as a lone raider against enemy shipping in the Bay of Bengal and along the busy trade routes of the Indian Ocean.

As events were to show, it was a wise decision. The *Emden* was the fastest warship in the Far East, and every merchantman was a sitting duck for her guns. The one ship she had to fear was the battlecruiser, *Australia*, which could have destroyed von Spee's entire squadron and blown the little *Emden* to bits without even having to come within range of German guns and torpedoes.

The British Admiralty, however, chose to delegate this mighty vessel to the lowly position of troop support in the New Guinea operations. This idiotic move not only ensured von Spee's escape, but provided the *Emden* with a vast area for unhindered operations. As a result, the dramatic career of the *Emden* and her crew holds a significant place in the annals of the war. The use she made of her unprecedented opportunities – the exceptional calibre of both her commanding officer and his gallant crew – provides an unforgettable picture of daring and brilliant seamanship; of spirited and determined men sacrificing their lives in a courageous, foredoomed struggle.

The author is indebted to government agencies in England, Germany, and Australia for their co-operation in releasing the

official documents of this exciting series of adventures, many of them for the first time; to the various libraries, public archives and marine and naval records, where other documents pertaining to the story were made available.

The Australian War Memorial provided the official account of "The *Emden* and the Convoys," eyewitness reports from the crew of H.M.A.S. *Sydney*; official government dispatches and decisions regarding the *Emden* and the Australian-New Zealand (ANZAC) troop movements and commitments; the official report of D'Arcy Farrant, superintendent of the wireless station on the Cocos Islands, and newspaper accounts of naval actions as reported by war correspondents and wire services to Australian newspapers. Brian Cummins, of the Brisbane *Courier-Mail*, did a fine job of tracking down and interviewing former crew members of *Sydney*, and searching naval files concerning the activity of the Australian Navy.

Lloyd's of London supplied the story of the Lutine Bell, information on insurance rates before and after the *Emden*'s depredations, and the account of the scene on their London trading floor when the news of the *Emden*'s destruction was announced. War reports to the *Times* of London and the *New York Times* and others were used as cross-references, but the accuracy of all published material was dismissed if it differed from the official histories of the events (and in many many cases, it did). The disposition of warships around the world at the start of hostilities was given by the Historical Section of the U.S. Navy and the statistics of each, including armament, was taken from Janes' *Fighting Ships* (1900-15). Again, if official records of naval actions showed armament and range discrepancies with Janes', the official reports were adhered to, because many changes were made after the ships were launched, and since these were secret they were not revealed to Janes at that time.

The British Admiralty supplied the disposition of the Allied Fleets, the log of H.M.A.S. *Sydney*, Captain Glossop's official report of the *Emden* action, Glossop's biography, and other pertinent information from *The War at Sea*, the official history of British naval action. Descriptions of the *Sydney*-

Emden battle were reported in official Navy Records and were released by the Historical Section of the U.S. Navy.

The co-operation of the West German authorities was superb. The *Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt* in Freiburg im Breisgau provided the official German report of the Cocos Islands campaign, as reported to the German Admiralty by Captain von Müller immediately after the action. This great naval organization also provided photographs, maps, newspaper accounts and official documentation of the *Emden* saga as well as the biographies of the officers and crew where needed, including their post-war activities as well as their careers in the German Navy. They supplied the names, ranks and duties of every officer and crewman aboard the *Emden*, including those who died (and where they died); as well as those of the wounded, the prisoners, and the escapees. The story of the Falkland Islands battle came from the historical society of Government House on the Falkland Islands, but the account of the naval action was provided by the British Admiralty.

References to three German books, *The Ayesha* and *The Cruise of the Emden* by Helmuth von Mücke, and *The Emden* by Franz Josef, Prince von Hohenzollern, who was a torpedo officer aboard the ship, were found to be helpful.

The author is also grateful to numbers of newsmen who gathered source material from newspapers in the Far East which carried the stories of the fall of Tsingtao, and the raids on Madras and Penang, and general accounts of the *Emden*'s depredations.

I

The First Move

Contrary to popular belief, the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo, on that otherwise pleasant afternoon of June 28, 1914, created little more than mild tremors in the capitals of Europe. There was one exception – Vienna.

Yet, even in Vienna, capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the uproar was not caused by any love for the dead heir to the throne, or for his beautiful, morganatic wife, Sophie, who had also been killed. In fact, the victims were hurried to their graves in the dead of night with funeral services of the type usually conducted for minor nobles. It was because the hated Serbians were thought to be responsible that Vienna was thunderstruck.

Europe at that moment was a turbulent patchwork of countries drunk with nationalism, dreaming of expansion, and seeking powerful alliances to support their ambitions. And nowhere was this patriotic fervour so extreme as in the Balkan States, particularly Serbia. Austria-Hungary hated the restless Serbs because they had recently seized territory from Turkey and were threatening to take more: all the while inflaming the Slavic minorities of Austria-Hungary into militant discontent.

Without hesitation, Vienna blamed Serbia for the murder. But Serbia was allied to Russia and Russia to France; thus the great powers of Europe were drawn inexorably into the web of the Balkan power struggle.

The last words of the dying Archduke, “It is nothing . . .

nothing. . . " would echo through time as the grossest understatement of the ages, for his death that lovely Sunday in Sarajevo was to touch off a holocaust that would ensnarl the world, and send some ten million men to their graves.

Yet, immediately after the crime, normality appeared to prevail. Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany continued his fishing trip into the North Sea waters off Norway, and President Poincaré of France, together with his premier and staff, sailed for Russia for talks and grouse hunting with the Czar. The rest of Europe packed into holiday trains and headed for the mountains and seashores to escape the heat-wave which had descended over the continent, raising temperatures and tempers to an all-time high.

But the military leaders of Austria were planning revenge, and in London, mindful that diplomacy might not solve the problems arising from the assassination, Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, placed the Royal Navy on emergency footing, and all leaves were cancelled. This action caused little more than a shrug in Europe, but it had a profound effect half-way around the world in the Chinese city of Tsingtao, a German leasehold precariously perched on the southernmost tip of Shantung province. Tsingtao was the headquarters of Germany's Far Eastern Naval Squadron and Churchill's order meant that Britain's powerful Asiatic Squadron was being prepared for action.

Strategically located for peacetime trade and tourism, Tsingtao, while boasting the best harbour in the Far East, was particularly vulnerable to siege because of its narrow sea entrance. Any serious trouble between England and Germany would require the immediate abandonment of Tsingtao by the Far Eastern Squadron.

It was not an easy decision to contemplate. It would mark the end of a great era of trade and cultural expansion. Germany had marched her troops into Tsingtao in 1898, ostensibly to protect the lives of Christian missionaries, several of whom had been brutally murdered during the preliminary skirmishes which culminated in the Boxer Rebellion of 1900. This pretext gave Germany the Far Eastern naval base which she required to further her expanding Pacific Empire; her "Christian" motives fooled no one.

Japan demanded that China expel the foreign intruders, but German diplomats were able to work on several weak yet influential members of the Manchu Court. They won a 99-year lease for a 170-square-mile, semi-circular area in Shantung, including the city of Tsingtao with its population of 60,000, and its land-locked harbour known as Kiaochow Bay. In return for the lease, Germany promised to drain the marshes, re-open the soft coal mines, erect schools and hospitals and build a railway from the port to the interior of China.

And Germany fulfilled her promises. She drained the marshes and turned thousands of acres into productive land. She cleaned miles of sparkling sand beaches on the north and west sides of the bay to attract Chinese tourists and their money. She built a 250-mile railroad to Tsi-nan to tap the internal trade of China. She opened the coal mines, built miles of docking facilities, and then, to protect her leasehold, fortified the surrounding hills and the many islands which guarded the narrow entrance between Kiaochow Bay and the Yellow Sea. New schools were opened, and western missionaries flocked in to operate them. A new hospital was built, new roads were laid, and slums were burned down. As a result, Tsingtao soon became known as the "Brightest Jewel in the Far East."

Meanwhile, German naval strength was building up in the Pacific theatre to correspond to the general massing of the Imperial military and naval forces in Europe, and on a number of lonely islands, docks and radio communication centres were quietly established. At the island of Pagan, in the strictest secrecy possible, the Germans constructed a large naval base, capable of supporting the entire Far Eastern Squadron, the most powerful German naval group at sea. Germany had been preparing for war for many years, and although the German High Seas Fleet had been downgraded by German militarists to a secondary position in the overall scheme of conquest in Europe, the Far Eastern Squadron was provided with the fastest and most modern of the German cruisers, the ablest of naval commanders, and the necessary material and provisions to conduct a formidable campaign. It would be able to battle and raid aggressively until the German military machine could subjugate Europe (in a matter of weeks, according to the plan).

Vice-Admiral Maximilian Graf von Spee had led his squadron from Tsingtao in mid-June for manoeuvres among the German-held islands of the Pacific, leaving behind his ablest commander, his fastest cruiser, and a strong marine garrison. It was no secret to von Spee that Europe's nations were on a collision course, and as he was isolated from home by all the oceans of the world (and these dominated by the powerful Royal Navy), he had taken a number of precautions long before Sarajevo. His move to the islands was made in such secrecy that the British did not know that von Spee and his warships had left Tsingtao. They believed that the Squadron was still there, because of the presence of the light cruiser *Emden*, commanded by Kapitän Karl von Müller, and the decrepit Austro-Hungarian battleship *Kaiserin Elizabeth*. This last ship had been left behind because, though too slow for the high seas, she could be formidable as a stationary fortress on Kiaochow Bay.

News of the assassination in Sarajevo electrified the Germans in Tsingtao. As soon as his wireless room had confirmed the report, the captain of the *Kaiserin Elizabeth* rushed ashore to seek out von Müller, who was also Officer Commanding Tsingtao. "It means war . . . war!" he shouted, and from that moment onward the great port and city began to change from a peacetime basis to one of military preparedness. Only a man like Karl von Müller could have attempted such a tremendous undertaking, and while the political power plays went on in Europe, von Müller moved quickly to protect German interests throughout the Far East, and at the same time to ensure that his brilliant naval career would not end ignominiously in a blockaded port.

Von Müller wirelessly von Spee, who had arrived at Ponape in the Carolines, that world events might now take a much more serious turn; he promised to keep the vice-admiral informed as best he could, hour by hour if necessary, on the quickly-changing moves in Europe. German naval officers had studied the Schlieffen plan for the conquest of France and Russia. Von Müller had also spent a considerable amount of time in analysing the possible offensive and defensive activity of the Far Eastern Squadron, and the position of all Germans and their

possessions in the Far East, if the plan should be implemented. Von Müller, and the other military leaders stationed in the Far East, knew that German forces were supposed to move quickly against French possessions. The hastily draughted plan to send German Marines into French Indochina with the support of the Far Eastern Squadron had already been tentatively approved. In early 1914, when the plan had been discussed by von Spee and the German Marine Command in Tsingtao, it seemed feasible that a successful attack could be launched if five thousand German Marines, now stationed at Tsingtao, were used. One or two thousand volunteers and reservists would be left behind to protect the port.

However, as the fateful year progressed, there appeared to be some serious doubts about the possibility of British neutrality if Germany and France should fight it out. Moreover, Japan, which was becoming increasingly anti-German, was urging China to oust the Germans from Tsingtao, or face intensified hostile economic treatment from Japan. As for the British in the Far East, they were not as critical of Japan's hostility toward the Germans as they were suspicious of her policy.

In the meantime, German and English sailors and their officers remained the best of friends. Only three weeks before Sarajevo the cruiser *Hampshire* had paid a courtesy visit to Tsingtao. The *Hampshire* then returned to her base at Wei-hai-wei, two hundred miles north of Tsingtao, and it was here that she received Churchill's signal placing the Royal Navy on emergency footing. The news of this directive was sent to von Müller and was passed on to Major Meyer Waldeck, the military governor of Tsingtao. The fear that Britain might take sides with France gathered strength, and with Japan anxious for any alliance against Germany in the Far East, the odds were such that an entire change of plans would be necessary for both the German military and the naval forces in the East.

Von Müller moved quickly and efficiently to protect his people from the growing menace. He ordered Governor Waldeck to prepare the defences of Tsingtao and to call up all able-bodied Germans for military duty, a move that would swell the garrison to some ten thousand men. Then he wirelessly all German ships at sea and in ports from Manila to Madras, and

from Yokahama to Batavia, to load food supplies quickly and speed to Tsingtao. These would provision a German merchant marine which could roam the oceans and supply the Far Eastern Squadron when it began its projected sweeps through the Far Eastern, and South Pacific waters to protect German interests and raid enemy commerce.

As wireless operators in Tsingtao sagged under the weight of signals, von Müller became a human machine dedicated to German survival. It was a task that might have overwhelmed most men, but the forty-one-year-old commander was no ordinary man. A brilliant naval officer and a superb tactician, he was soon to reshape the entire naval strategy of the Pacific and Indian Oceans. He angrily cut through red tape to get the supplies he needed: foodstuffs, arms, ammunition, coal, and medical supplies. German civilians, soldiers, and sailors, and thousands of Chinese coolies – everyone who could lift and walk – were pressed into service on the round-the-clock job of loading and unloading the ships in the roads, building defences, repairing the forts that surrounded the city, arming the merchant marine, converting huge passenger liners to armed ships, and training defenders.

Von Spee moved on to the Island of Truk, but was kept constantly informed of political events in Europe and in Japan, while food and coal poured into Tsingtao from the outside world. Output was stepped up in the Shantung coal mines, and thousands of tons of coal were loaded into the bunkers of ships.

Three tremendous forts of the latest type, elaborately constructed and equipped with concrete and steel cupolas, were now mounting high-calibre guns able to command both landward and seaward approaches to Tsingtao. They were named *Moltke Berg*, *Bismarck Berg*, and *Iltis Berg*. Earth redoubts and thousands of yards of trenches were formed along the landward perimeter of the city and around Prince Heinrich Hill, whose crest, five miles from the city, dominated the entire Tsingtao area.

And while Tsingtao readied herself for any eventuality, Austria's militant Foreign Minister Count von Bechthold, backed by the military group, was draughting an ultimatum to Serbia. Although approved by the Austrian Government on

July 19, it was not delivered until the French mission to Russia under President Poincaré had terminated on July 23. At six o'clock in the evening of July 23 Count von Bechthold handed the Serbians the ultimatum which had to be complied with or rejected within forty-eight hours.

The news of the ultimatum broke upon the world on Friday, July 24. Germans marched through Berlin demanding Serbian compliance, and the Kaiser returned from his cruise ready to agree to anything his generals decided. But although his generals were ready, they were startled nevertheless, when Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia on July 28, without informing them in advance. Winston Churchill ordered the British Fleet to Scapa Flow.

In Tsingtao, the news of the ultimatum and the subsequent declaration of war was received by von Müller with grave misgivings. He wirelesslyed the news to von Spee and stepped up his pace to an almost impossible pitch. He, like his officers, had not slept for days. He had set a deadline for his own departure for July 31 with the fervent hope that the defences of the city would have been completed and his ships in the roads provisioned and on their way to the safety of the open seas. At dawn on July 31, von Müller stood on the bridge of his sleek light cruiser, *Emden*, lying alongside the Imperial Dock, giving orders to his hard-pressed staff, and sending last-minute instructions to his commanders in the city. Von Müller intended to depart from the dock at precisely 6.00 p.m. on this hot and humid Friday.

His deeply-tanned, weather-etched face showed the signs of his anxiety. His pale blue eyes darted from the activity on his cruiser to the bustle in the harbour and he ordered heliographs sent to the merchant ships giving them coded sailing orders to the many secret locations to which they were now assigned. Running his long fingers through his rumpled blond hair, he barked commands and dictated signals, until his throat was dry and aching. His white linen tropical suit sagged in the heat, and coal-dust settled on his shoulder braid and drifted over his six-foot frame. His boyish grin had disappeared, and his impeccable manners had been discarded. His laughter and his jokes would not return until he was clear of Tsingtao.

Turning his back on the dockside for a moment, von Müller noted the mounting activity in the harbour. Six converted merchantmen were getting up steam, and black smoke poured from their funnels. They were the *Elsbeth*, which would sail with the *Emden* as her supply ship, the *Staatssekretär Kraetke*, the *Gouverneur Jaschke*, the *Longmoon*, the *Ahlers*, and the giant *Markomannia* which, until recently, had been in service with the North German Lloyd Steamship Company. Darting back and forth in the channel area were four gunboats, *Jaguar*, *Luchs*, *Iltis*, and *Tiger*. Each mounted two torpedoes on the forward deck supported by one small cannon and two machine guns. Farther back in Kiaochow Bay, colliers and merchantmen, which had just arrived at Tsingtao, were being scrubbed and provisioned, but it seemed doubtful whether they would be able to clear harbour for several days at least. Many of them had been at sea for many months, and their hulls were encrusted with barnacles and their boilers heavy with rust.

Von Müller had been elated to see the *Staatssekretär Kraetke* arrive in the port three days before, following a quick dash from Singapore. It enabled him to obtain her First Officer, Oberleutnant Julius Lauterbach, a man who knew every inch of the Far Eastern coasts and the outer islands, as he had served in these seas since he was a boy. Lauterbach, known throughout the China Seas as "Julio Boom Boom," was a huge man, weighing more than 275 pounds. His wide, laughing face was graced with a huge handlebar moustache. His exploits against Chinese pirates and his own hairbreadth escapes from custom cutters in the Singapore area were known in every dockside pub from Penang to Tokyo. Von Müller could hear his booming voice now, singing a boisterous sea shanty as he supervised the work on the busy dockside.

"These reservists have no manners whatsoever," von Müller observed as his First Officer, Helmuth von Mücke, joined him on the bridge. The two officers discussed the activity on Kiaochow Bay, and then von Müller left the bridge. He had just received the news that several German merchantmen had sailed into Oriental ports and were awaiting instructions, as it was not now possible to sail to Tsingtao and beat von Müller's timetable.

Von Müller went to the always-busy, always-noisy wireless room and dictated signals to the German marine offices in Tokyo and Shanghai. He ordered five thousand tons of coal to Pagan, five thousand tons of coal to "Assembly A" (a secret rendezvous area located at $35^{\circ}51'N$ and $120^{\circ}20'E$); and food-stuffs, small arms ammunition, oil, and coal to "Assembly B" (another secret rendezvous located at $25^{\circ}N$, $135^{\circ}E$).

After these signals had been sent and acknowledged, von Müller left the *Emden* with his aide, Lieutenant Albert von Guérard, and hurried by rickshaw to German military headquarters and a brief discussion with Major Waldeck. The two officers reviewed the entire defence situation of Tsingtao and the training programme of the German reservists. Von Müller was satisfied, but he cautioned Waldeck to be vigilant, to deploy his meagre forces at the strongest defence positions and, in the event of an all-out assault by land and sea against the city, to negotiate a truce in order to get non-combatants, particularly women and children, to safety.

Waldeck promised von Müller that any action against Tsingtao would be met by fierce fighting. The waters leading to Kiaochow Bay for miles around had been sewn with mines. Gunboats patrolled the channels between the seven islands which guarded the entrance to the bay and the islands themselves were manned by artillery units. Backing these defenders were the huge guns of the *Kaiserin Elizabeth* and the guns of the forts on the hills, guns that could swing quickly from sea to land wherever the firepower was required. Waldeck said that all trenches and redoubts had been completed, and that he planned to use the city's only aeroplane to scout the enemy and to act as an aerial observer for the big guns. Von Müller curtly dismissed a luncheon of marine officers at the Daschal Restaurant, believing a social gathering was unnecessary at this stage, and he rode back to the Imperial Dock during the mid-afternoon, satisfied that the defence of the leasehold was in good hands. As he drove down to Kuangsy Road toward the dock area, he told von Guérard that he would be leaving Tsingtao with regret.

As his rickshaw started down the hill between the long lines of struggling coolies, he gasped at the transformation that had

taken place in his beloved *Emden*. Ordinarily immaculate, the silvery light cruiser was now smeared from bow to stern in thick coal-dust. Her unscrubbed decks were piled with hundreds of cases of canned food, baskets of fresh fruit and nuts, cases of German beer and champagne, and crates of noisy ducks and complaining chickens. "*Mein Gott, mein Emden,*" he sputtered, and von Guérard chuckled. Von Müller managed a sickly grin, but he knew well that despite her present scruffy appearance, the *Emden* was a formidable fighting ship.

Built by Danzig craftsmen in 1909 and commissioned a year later, the *Emden* was distinguished by three tall funnels, an array of bulging side gun turrets called "babettes," an armoured deck, conning tower, and charthouse, and two giant lattice-work steel masts which dominated the silhouette of the little ship. On each of the masts was mounted twin searchlights of tremendous size, with high-powered lamps and lenses that could sweep hundreds of yards ahead or to both sides. Above the searchlights were crows-nests where double lookouts would soon sway to the rolling seas. Between the steel masts amidships was a large raised tower which contained the very latest of German range-finders and a central fire-control system which was duplicated in the conning tower.

The *Emden* had been built for high speed. She was lean for manoeuvrability, displaced only 3,600 tons, and had only enough armour plate to guard her vitals: two inches amidships, three-quarters of an inch bow and stern, and four inches around her conning tower and charthouse.

Her knifed-edged prow jutted from the deck level forward in a graceful arc to meet the waterline, a design that identified German destroyers and cruisers during that era. She mounted ten 4.1-inch guns, eight 5-pounders, four machine guns and two submerged torpedo tubes. Two of the 4.1's protruded from heavy armoured shields on the foredeck, twenty feet ahead of the conning tower. Two on the afterdeck were similarly mounted and well-armoured. On her starboard and port sides, she mounted three more, in armoured turrets which jutted out over the sides, above the water. In action, the *Emden* could fire five 4.1's broadside. Forward, she could line up her foredeck and forward port and starboard side turrets to give

her a spread of four, and she could fire the same number aft.

She was powered by reciprocating engines which gulped prodigious amounts of coal from her 900-ton bunkers. Her total horsepower with a full head of steam was 13,500, and her original design speed, like that of her sister ship, *Dresden*, was established at 24.5 knots. However, she cruised best at 25.1 knots; her top speed was close to 29 knots, and nothing could catch her in the Far East at this time.

Her assigned complement was 321 officers and men. Today, however, she would carry 360 crewmen and 19 officers, because von Müller had no intention of leaving any naval men behind. If they had had any sea experience at all, they were pressed into his service.

Von Müller went aboard the *Emden* and checked his timetable of events. It was close to schedule. Unfortunately, at 4.00 p.m., just two hours before sailing time, a Chinese coolie fell into the coal bunkers, and it took almost an hour to find his body. The accident meant a delay in the sailing and von Müller spent this irritating additional time with his navigators, Kapitänleutnant Hans Kloepfer, the German Navy's navigation specialist for all Far Eastern waters, and Kapitänleutnant Hans Gropius, the *Emden*'s navigator. Then he returned to the bridge in time to see a long line of coolies dragging and carrying the fine furnishings of his ship to the warehouses along the Kwangtung Road. Deep-piled chesterfields, leather sofas, drapes, teakwood chests and desks, paintings, carvings, oriental rugs, statues of rosewood and brass, and other fine furniture which had contributed to the life of the German naval officer on the eastern station, were replaced by cases of arms and ammunition, and many cases of German beer.

At 6.30 p.m., a nondescript band of sailors began to play *Deutschland Über Alles*, and the sound of whistles and the shouts of many throats filled the air as the *Emden* slipped her moorings and began to inch from her berth. Her pilot would take her through the channel entrance and through the mine-fields to the freedom of the seas beyond. As the *Emden* moved, so moved her supply ship, the *Elsbeth*.

It was 7.00 p.m., and von Müller was one hour late, unable to make up the time loss caused by the death of the coolie.

He had to clear the minefields before dark, and, at a speed greater than he had at first intended, the sleek cruiser sliced quickly through the channel with the *Elsbeth* steaming ponderously in her wake.

With Steuermann Hans Monkediek at the wheel, and officers Ernst von Levetzow, August Geerde, and Ernst Gaede on duty in the conning tower, the *Emden* zig-zagged through the minefields, beneath the brooding forts on the hills. By 8.30 p.m. she was clear, and there was no sign of any other ships on the Yellow Sea. The British were not watching the port as they had been ordered to do. This omission was to contribute to the general confusion which permitted the Germans to run unseen and unreported for a long time.

Steering an eastward course twenty-five miles south of the Socrates Rocks, the *Emden* sliced quickly ahead, leaving the *Elsbeth* to trail in the rear, in communication henceforth by wireless only. If he should run into hostile ships in the event of war, von Müller planned that the *Elsbeth* should be far enough away to escape to the safety of the southern oceans.

Darkness closed over the *Emden*. All lights were extinguished as she hugged the Shantung coast, well north of the recognized sea lanes. Von Müller joined his officers for a champagne toast, then returned to his cabin for the first sleep in many nights. But first he read his Bible for almost an hour before putting out his lantern.

Far to the north, at the port of Weihaiwei, the British Asiatic Squadron under Admiral Jerram was feverishly coaling. German agents were watching, ready to inform Tsingtao the moment the powerful squadron was ready to put to sea. Von Müller was awaiting this critical information. He had no intention of tangling with the British squadron. He could outrace it, he knew, but he didn't want the British or anyone else to suspect either his whereabouts or his eastward course across the Yellow Sea.

They would know of him soon enough.

The First Capture

During the darkness of the early morning of Saturday, August 1, 1914, the *Emden* moved through rising gales in the Yellow Sea at fifteen knots.

In Europe, the British Home Fleet had secretly put out to sea under cover of darkness, and with lights out was now moving through the straits of Dover for Scapa Flow off northern Scotland. Already Austrian guns had fired into Belgrade, and the Serbians had blown up a bridge between the two countries. Russia was mobilizing its armies, and the Kaiser had called on her to stop within twenty-four hours. But Russia refused. The die had been cast.

At 5.00 p.m. that afternoon, as thousands of Germans milled through the streets of Berlin, not realizing what was to come, the Kaiser signed the order to mobilize the Imperial Army; two hours later he signed the declaration of war against Russia.

Almost a half a day behind European events, von Müller on that August morning had plotted a course for the *Emden* between Quelpart Island and the Korean mainland when he received a wireless message from Tsingtao, advising him that the German Admiralty had signalled all ships to "stand by."

But the *Emden* continued ahead beneath the blue-grey storm clouds, yawning and shuddering in troughs and rearing against the onslaught of the giant waves that broke over her bows. The four seamen assigned to duty in the two crows-nests were swung about in great arcs and had to be replaced every four hours with fresh lookouts. Fifty crew members were kept

busy on decks awash as they struggled with cases of food and ammunition which had not been sufficiently secured for such a storm.

No ships were sighted; merchantmen and fishing boats alike had been driven from the sea by the gale which had almost reached the proportions of a typhoon. The feverish activity aboard the *Emden* at this moment was not confined to saving the supplies and keeping the cruiser on course. The wireless room was kept busy plotting the courses of distant ships from their intercepted wireless signals, and if they appeared to be within several hundred miles of the *Emden*, their location would be noted upon a large marine map in the charthouse. While some telegraphers were listening to the cacophony of wireless sounds, others were speeding messages to distant German consular and shipping offices.

To Tokyo: REQUISITION GERMAN STEAMERS NOW AT JAPAN FOR CONVEYING COAL . . . SEND YORCK WITH AS MUCH COAL AS POSSIBLE TO PAGAN.

To Manila and Batavia: BEGIN SHIPMENTS OF COAL ACCORDING TO INSTRUCTIONS.

To all offices: WARN GERMAN MERCHANT SHIPS AT SEA.

At 5.00 a.m. on the morning of Sunday, August 2, von Müller was roused in his cabin and informed that Germany had mobilized; two hours later he was informed that war had been declared on Russia. He immediately ordered a course that would intersect the busy Yokahama-Vladivostok steamer route in the hope of nabbing a Russian passenger liner or merchantman.

Then, as was his custom, he conducted church services after breakfast on the afterdeck of the *Emden*. After prayers had been concluded, he announced that Germany was at war. The cheers of the officers and crewmen echoed and re-echoed as the cruiser moved ever eastward, cloaked by the storm that was beginning to abate.

In far-off London, it was also a day of prayer and cheering as the British Cabinet wrestled with the issue of war or peace. At 7.00 p.m. that night, the Germans delivered an ultimatum to Belgium to permit the free access of German troops across her soil.

On August 3, a holiday in England, Germany declared war on France.

In New York City, the North German Lloyd liner *Kronprinz Wilhelm* slipped out of the harbour with 2,000 extra tons of coal jammed into her bunkers and holds. British ships in the Mediterranean began to shadow German merchantmen. In Tsingtao, the *Markomannia* and five other converted ships slipped out of Kiaochow, but were not shadowed. There were no other ships in sight, and each headed for her own secret destination.

Meanwhile the *Emden* was edging closer to the busy sea lanes west of Japan. She was now moving rapidly between the Korean Peninsula and Saishu Island into the Korean Strait. Russian steamers plying between Nagasaki and Vladivostok normally steamed south-east from Nagasaki, south to the Goto Islands, westward for some distance to avoid islands, and finally north into a channel between Japan and Korea and thence into the Sea of Japan for the 675-mile run.

Von Müller and von Mücke, after studying the marine charts of the area with great care, decided that the most logical area to find a Russian ship would be some 50 miles due east of Pusan on the south-eastern tip of Korea. This would give the *Emden* the camouflage of the hazy Korean background and the protection of several islands in the vicinity. The *Emden* was worked up to 24 knots; von Müller intended to strike quickly and then be swallowed up in the loneliness of the seas.

Although he was in touch with Tsingtao wireless, the most powerful station in the Far East, von Müller was unable to get any word on the movement of the British Asiatic Squadron which had steamed from Weihaiwei. The heavy seas had kept coastal steamers and junks in port, and these were always the best source of information to the Germans. Unknown to them, the *Emden* had crossed the path of the British Squadron the night before, only 50 scant miles away. Such were the fortunes of war.

In London, on August 4, the English Cabinet met to draft a declaration of war against Germany. At 2.05 p.m. that day, the British Admiralty issued a special bulletin to all ships, including the Asiatic Squadron. THE BRITISH ULTIMATUM TO

GERMANY WILL EXPIRE AT MIDNIGHT GREENWICH MEAN TIME, ON AUGUST FOUR . . . NO ACT OF WAR SHOULD BE COMMITTED BEFORE THAT HOUR AT WHICH TIME THE TELEGRAM TO COMMENCE HOSTILITIES AGAINST GERMANY WILL BE DISPATCHED FROM THE ADMIRALTY.

That night, the *Emden*'s lookouts spotted the lights of a large ship proceeding northward off Saishu. Her wireless signals were obviously in Russian code, and by using a system which the German wireless operators called resistance measuring, they had plotted the position of the ship by the strength of her signals and then closed toward her. Action Stations was sounded, and as the sirens wailed German gunners rushed to their positions, and shells were loaded into the ammunition hoists.

The little cruiser moved like a ghost ship, and all lights were extinguished as she closed on the liner, which was travelling at 16 knots. *Emden* followed two miles astern throughout the night, and when the first streaks of dawn appeared over the Sea of Japan von Müller gave the order to strike.

The *Emden* leapt ahead, black smoke coiling from her three funnels. The helmsman on the Russian ship was unaware that a cruiser, lying low in the choppy waters, was coming up on his port side at a fast rate of speed. The mate was having tea on the bridge. Captain Charles Austin, the skipper of the liner, was asleep, and so were several hundred passengers. War was not even remotely considered. The voyage of this liner was quiet and peaceful, until a blank shell from the *Emden* exploded over her foredeck.

Captain Austin ran to the bridge. He was in his pyjamas, and he was cursing furiously. He saw the cruiser off his port side about half a mile away. Her heliograph was signalling in International Code: HALT . . . DO NOT USE YOUR WIRELESS . . . HALT . . . DO NOT USE YOUR WIRELESS.

“To Hell with them,” yelled Austin as he moved the engine room telegraph to “Full Speed Ahead.”

HALT, signalled the *Emden*. PREPARE FOR A BOARDING PARTY.

“More steam,” shouted Austin into the engine-room voice pipe.

His liner was a new one, the Russian ship, *Rjasan*, on her

maiden voyage, and Austin worked her up to 22 knots, zig-zagging away from the *Emden*.

Von Müller was tiring of the game. A second blank was fired over the *Rjasan's* bow, and again Austin refused to stop. Von Müller then ordered a live shell, and the forward port gun of the *Emden* barked. The shell exploded forward of the *Rjasan's* bridge, spraying bridge and foredeck with shrapnel. Austin was at last convinced that escape was futile, and he ordered the engines stopped. It took some time for the *Emden's* boarding party under Lauterbach to get aboard, because the Russian sailors refused to handle the lines.

Lauterbach with his twenty men forced the Russian crew against the walls with bayonets while the passengers milled around the decks. They were ignored. Lauterbach broke down the port-side steel door of the bridge and was astounded to see his old friend Austin standing like a Russian bear beside the wheel. The two men glared at each other for a moment and then broke into raucous laughter. They had sailed together for many years in the Far East and had been thrown out of more waterfront dives than any two sailors in history.

"What a dirty trick to play on an old friend," said Austin. "My God, I've only had this ship a week. She's the cleanest I've ever had."

"War is war," chuckled Lauterbach as he seized the ship's papers and radioed von Müller the name of the vessel, its number of passengers, and its destination.

Von Müller had intended to take off the passengers and crew and sink the ship on the spot, but he had just received an astonishing wireless message from Tsingtao. It told him that the British Asiatic Squadron was not coming to Tsingtao but was apparently *en route* to Hong Kong. Von Müller decided instantly to escort the *Rjasan* back to Tsingtao for conversion into an armed merchantman. He signalled Lauterbach to follow, and the two ships turned westward for the port that von Müller hadn't expected to see again for a long time.

Tsingtao wirelessed von Spee of the *Rjasan's* capture. It was the first naval action and capture of the First World War, and champagne flowed like water in the *Emden's* wardroom, in von Spee's cabin, and in Tsingtao where the news spread like wildfire.

In London, the evening of August 4 saw the crowds begin to gather before Buckingham Palace. The King and his family made several appearances before the wildly cheering crowd. At 12.00 p.m. Greenwich Mean Time, Big Ben boomed out the hours. It was midnight, and Germany had not replied to Britain's ultimatum concerning Belgium's neutrality. London went wild as the fateful hour struck; the First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, sent the message to all Royal Navy ships around the world: COMMENCE HOSTILITIES AGAINST GERMANY.

The next morning, August 5, German troops moved against the Belgium forts at Liège and Russia moved against East Prussia. The First World War had begun. Italy announced her neutrality, the United States banned aid to all belligerents, and a Cunard liner called the *Lusitania* ignored German threats and steamed out of New York harbour shortly after midnight with lights out, and with the British cruiser *Essex* escorting her to the open seas.

On the *Emden*, von Müller received the message that Germany and England were at war. He received the message with the comment: "Now I know where to go and what to do." He informed his cheering officers and crew of the news, heliographed the same news to Lauterbach on the *Rjasan*, and then turned to the business of the moment. He wirelessed Tsingtao to have 500 tons of coal at the Imperial Dock. He was going to take a chance and refill his bunkers. He would need every ton of coal he could get. He had a long way to travel before he would find a friendly port again.

At midnight on August 5, von Müller, having just closed his Bible, was preparing to make a night inspection, as he often did, when he received news from Tsingtao that the Canadian Pacific liner, *Empress of Japan*, had been delayed in Yokahama and was preparing to leave in forty-eight hours for Hong Kong with war supplies. Von Müller and von Mücke agreed that with a little luck they could coal at Tsingtao and then make a dash across the North China Sea to intercept the *Empress of Japan* before she reached Hong Kong. Both officers were jubilant at the prospects of a British capture.

At 11.00 a.m., August 6, the hills of Shantung came into view off the starboard bow. So far not a ship had been sighted,

although they had just crossed one of the busiest trade routes in the world, only 200 miles north of Shanghai. The sea had flattened, the sun was warm and generous, and both the *Emden* and her prize made excellent time. The entire city of Tsingtao turned out at the waterfront to cheer the arrival. But von Müller wasted no time. He didn't even bother to leave his ship. By evening the *Emden*'s coal had been replenished from the shore supply, and with 900 tons in the bunkers she cleared port.

Before leaving, von Müller had ordered the Russian crew and the badly-frightened passengers from the *Rjasan* to be shipped by rail to Peking for return to Vladivostok. He suggested that the name *Rjasan* be changed to *Kormoran*, and that she be outfitted and dispatched to Pagan. He signalled all merchantmen left in the roads to clear Kiaochow by midnight, whether fully supplied or not.

The Tsingtao wireless station had received some interesting reports from intelligence sources scattered over the Far East: the British Asiatic Squadron had arrived in Hong Kong; a small British Squadron had cleared the Singapore roads and had been last reported steaming into the Bay of Bengal (presumably to escort Indian troops from Calcutta to Europe); two British cruisers and two accompanying sloops were in the North Pacific near the Canadian coast; two French cruisers and two destroyers were in Indochinese waters, while three other French warships were on duty west of the Malayan Peninsula. Of great importance was the signal that the powerful Russian cruisers, *Askold* and *Zemchug*, were in a Vladivostok dry-dock, undergoing repairs.

This preliminary arrangement of hostile naval ships meant only one thing to von Müller. He was free to wander where he pleased through the North China Seas, and he transmitted the good news to von Spee and then, followed by his supply ship *Prinz Eitel Friedrich*, he cleared Tsingtao with a course that would intercept the *Empress of Japan* midway between Yokahama and Hong Kong.

The misty-blue hills of Shantung faded for the last time. The *Emden* would not return. She had a date with destiny.

3

To Pagan for Orders

On August 7 the Yellow Sea was calm, and the *Emden* moved at 18 knots across its placid surface on a south-easterly course. When well beyond the regular sea lanes, she reduced her speed as the *Prinz Eitel Friedrich* changed her colours to those of the American Export Lines, and unfurled the Stars and Stripes from her staffs.

Elsewhere in the world, the British were faring badly at sea. In the North Sea the British cruiser *Amphion* ran into a newly-sown German minefield, and went to the bottom with all hands. The German armed transport, *Karlsruhe*, escaped a sleepy British squadron in the West Indies, and was off to raid the Atlantic sea lanes. The German cruisers, *Goeben* and *Breslau*, slipped through a British blockade off Messina, Sicily, which had been specifically ordered to stop them, and were now safely *en route* to the Dardanelles.

In the Far East, the *Markomannia* was *en route* to Pagan and had, like the *Prinz Eitel Friedrich*, changed her colours to those of a U.S. flag line.

During the night of August 7, the *Emden*'s ever-alert wireless operators picked up signals being transmitted from an unidentified ship to Hong Kong. By the strength of her signals it was thought that she would be a ship of importance, and because she was transmitting in code it was guessed she would be British. According to the plotting in the charthouse she could very well be the *Empress of Japan*, and von Müller gave the order to change course slightly and bear down on the wireless signals

which appeared to locate the ship about fifty miles ahead. He planned to follow her, and by the light of dawn bring her to a halt as he had the *Rjasan*, transfer her passengers to the *Prinz Eitel Friedrich*, and then send her to the bottom. He would have liked to capture her, but he had no place to arm and outfit her. On the other hand, sinking her would, he knew, draw British warships to this particular area, thus leaving the routes of his supply ships out of Tsingtao relatively free of enemy activity for a few days.

At 4.00 a.m. the lights of the liner appeared over the bow. Levertsow was on duty in the conning tower and the wheel was being handled by steersman's mate Albert Plotz. When he awakened von Müller thought it strange that the ship should be travelling with all lights ablaze, but when the first light of day appeared the reason for her unconcern was soon apparent. She was the Japanese mailship *Sakaki Maru*, but this fact was not known until the *Emden* was close by, her guns pointed at her hull.

Von Müller, who hated the Japanese with cold Teutonic fury, would have liked to have sunk her on the spot, but Japan and Germany were not at war. The Japanese liner began sending out SOS signals, informing the world that a German warship was at her side and threatening her. Von Müller swung the *Emden* in a tight turn to the west at high speed, and signalled the *Prinz Eitel Friedrich*, out of sight beyond the southern horizon, to continue as planned.

The *Emden* travelled rapidly to the western horizon to fool the Japanese; she then turned north so that her smoke could still be seen on a course as though she was trying to make for the Korean coast. Then, when completely out of sight, von Müller turned south-west and then east for several hours, and later in the afternoon he headed for Pagan, 1,200 miles away to the east, south-east.

The long, lonely route would give von Müller time to plot the *Emden*'s future, and to discuss the entire war programme with his officers, which he had not yet had time to do, because of the tremendous burden placed on him in Tsingtao. He had always tried to keep his officers and his crew informed on world affairs through a programme of current events which included a

general picture of Germany's role in the world of trade, commerce, and politics. Unlike most German naval officers, he was neither autocratic nor snobbish. He liked to laugh with his men. On shore leave several years earlier in Rio he had learned to dance the tango, and then showed the men how to dance it. His popularity among his crew was legendary. He was virtually worshipped, even when he insisted on long and generous Sunday services; even though his officers sometimes found it irritating when he would quote passages from the Bible, to praise or admonish them for their decisions or behaviour.

He referred to his Bible constantly. Lutheranism had been the essential ingredient of the training from his deeply religious mother in the old city of Blankenburg, where he was born on June 16, 1873. Young Karl had also received his strict good manners from his mother. But his quick wit, his laughter and his sharp intellect he gained from his father, Hugo, scion of one of the oldest aristocratic families of the Harz Forest region, and Chief of Police of Blankenburg when Karl was born. His mother, a beautiful, blonde, statuesque woman, regarded as a rare beauty in her day, was Charlotte von Bennigsen, whose only duty in life, she believed, was to raise young Karl as strictly as possible. She made him read from the Bible each morning before breakfast and each night at bedtime, and she took him to church several times during the week and twice on Sundays.

He welcomed the escape from the strictness of home and from the High School of Languages in Blankenburg when his father's great influence placed him in the Kiel Science School at Kiel, and then in the German Naval Cadet School at Ploen, near Hamburg. He used to laugh about the date of his joining the navy — April Fool's Day, 1891!

One year later Karl was a cadet aboard the training ship *Gneisenau*. He proved to be an extremely alert tactician and gunner, and his promotions were fairly rapid. He was commissioned an Unterleutnantzürsee on September 20, 1894, and was immediately made a signal officer on the battleship *Baden*. Soon afterwards he served on the warships *Moltke*, *Blitz*, *Aegir*, and *Schwalbe*. On April 1, 1900, he was promoted to Oberleutnant and was assigned to naval duty in East Africa. He returned to Germany to become an Adjutant in the Marine

Division Headquarters at Kiel, and in March, 1903, he was promoted to Kapitänleutnant.

He served two tough years in the German Naval Academy and after graduation was appointed artillery officer aboard the line battleship, *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse*. This brought him to the attention of the German High Naval Command, and he was transferred to the Admiralty Staff of the High Seas Fleet under the careful tutoring of Admiral Prince von Preusen. He was elevated to the rank of Korvette-Kapitän, and remained in various Admiralty Staff positions until early 1913, when he was given command of the light cruiser *Emden* and assigned, at the specific request of von Spee, to the Far Eastern Squadron at Tsingtao. Now, on his way to join his commander at Pagan, he was informed by wireless that the Japanese politicians and newspapers had started a hate programme against the Germans in Tokyo and Yokahama, and German nationals in these cities had been warned to prepare for trouble and to escape to friendly countries as quickly as possible. The Japanese people were being constantly reminded that Germans had helped oust them from the Russian city of Port Arthur, and this had roused them into a frenzy. The Japanese attitude was to have a profound effect on von Spee's future course of action, and he intended making his newly-formed plans known to all his captains as soon as the *Emden* arrived at the rendezvous in Pagan.

On August 11 the cruiser *Hampshire* sighted the *Elsbeth* moving eastward across the South China Sea for the Island of Yap, and after removing her crew sank her with gunfire, consigning the valuable ship and her 1,800 tons of coal to the bottom. The next day the same *Hampshire* was so short of coal that she was detached from the China Squadron and sent back to Hong Kong to refuel, a situation that one English historian was prompted to define as a "helpless performance." In his defence of the act, Admiral Jerram was reported in the official naval records as saying he could not afford to spare men for a prize crew, and the seas were too rough to transfer coal.

On August 12 the *Emden* and the *Prinz Eitel Friedrich* raised Pagan, having crossed 2,700 miles of ocean without once meeting a ship of any kind. Pagan was an island paradise,

located in the Marianas, a chain of lonely, unfrequented islands lying 1,700 miles due west of Hawaii, 1,350 miles south and slightly east of Tokyo, 2,000 miles east of Hong Kong, and 320 miles north of Guam. The Marianas, together with the Caroline and Marshall Islands, the Bismarck Archipelago, the Northern Solomon Islands, Samoa, and south-east New Guinea, comprised the German territories of the Pacific at the outbreak of the First World War.

Pagan was the most beautiful of all. As the *Emden* and her consort moored in the idyllic harbour just at twilight, beneath the deep, deep green of the mountain cone, they seemed like toys on a sea of blue glass. The shimmering harbour, ruffled by the multi-coloured shades of the dying day, was a veritable fortress in which rode the greatest number of massed warships outside of the North Sea. The mighty *Scharnhorst*, von Spee's flagship, was anchored by the side of the powerful *Gneisenau*, their signal lights blinking in the gathering dusk. Half a mile to the north rode the cruiser *Nürnberg*, and near her the fleet tender *Titania* and the *Emden*.

Von Spee had only arrived at Pagan the day before, having conducted battle practice since leaving Ponape. He planned a council-of-war for the next day, and promptly at ten o'clock on the morning of August 13 the officers of the cruiser squadron gathered aboard the *Scharnhorst*, where they were addressed by the peppery Vice-Admiral. He told them frankly that he had intended taking the Far Eastern Squadron to the South China Sea, to attack French ports in Cochin-China and harry British ships plying the busy Singapore trade routes. But he had changed his mind. The increasing belligerency of Japan convinced him of the impossibility of his ships remaining in the Far East. To stay in the Pacific Islands was an invitation to suicide if the Japanese went to war, and there was every indication they were moving in that direction.

While he was outlining his position, the *Scharnhorst's* wireless room picked up a message that the newspaper *Berlin Tageblatt* had been ordered out of Japan. The Japanese Government was saying that Tsingtao was in the hands of German marauders who were menacing their trade routes. A government bulletin, re-broadcast by Hong Kong radio, quoted the

Japanese Government as saying: "It is now imperative to make von Spee's ships homeless."

All this strengthened von Spee's position, but many of his senior officers did not agree. Arguments broke out, while von Spee bristled with anger, stroked his crisp grey beard and tapped his feet impatiently on the platform which had been raised for him. When the arguments appeared to be getting out of hand, he brought the flat of his sword down on the table with a resounding clap that could be heard halfway across the harbour.

"How long do you think we will last when the Japanese and the British get together and start hunting us down? Do you think they are stupid? They are not. The only place we have friends and places where we can coal and get food supplies must be somewhere on the south coast of South America, and that is where we will go of necessity."

That ended the discussion. Von Spee then held a private meeting with von Müller in his cabin, which lasted most of the day.

Meanwhile, the ships in the roads were being fuelled and supplied. Besides the warships there were the armed merchantmen and supply vessels: *Holsatia*, *Mark*, *Gouverneur Jaschke*, *Staatssekretär Kraetke*, *Yorck*, *Longmoon*, *Prince Waldemar*, *Markomannia*, *Prinz Eitel Friedrich* and *Ahlers*. The *Kormoran*, formerly the *Rjasan*, had wirelessed that she was *en route* to Pagan. Only the *Elsbeth* was missing, and von Spee was not aware that she had been sunk. He was delighted that so many of the ships which had been in enemy ports in the East had reached Pagan. He told von Müller that he hoped to take his squadron across the Pacific and find a port in South America, such as Valparaiso, which would permit him to stay. Then he would be content to harry enemy shipping on the west coast of the Americas.

Von Müller questioned him concerning the caching of coal and food in supply ships through the East Indies, and in other locations in the South Pacific Islands. Von Spee replied that he was detaching the *Emden* from his squadron, making von Müller his own boss, and sending him into the waters of the East Indies and the Indian Ocean to raid enemy shipping.

After exhausting the German supply ships he might be able to live from the captured cargoes of the enemy. The idea delighted von Müller, but he told no one, not even his constant companion, von Mücke. He wanted to surprise his officers and crew the next day when the announcement would be made to the entire squadron. Even that noontime, when the squadron's officers toasted von Müller for sinking the first ship of the war at sea, he did not breathe a whisper of the *Emden*'s future. He knew that the other captains would be angered, because they had been outspoken in their desire to keep the squadron in the Far East, and perhaps sail as far south as Australia and New Zealand to bag troopships on the way to Europe.

While the officers were drinking their final toasts, the last they would ever have together, the merchant ships were clearing Pagan harbour for the long journey. It would take them and the cruisers east and south through the Caroline Archipelago, through the Marshall and Gilbert chain of islands, to Palmyra and Christmas Islands, and thence south and east to the vicinity of Valparaiso, Chile, where Germany had a consulate and a high-powered wireless transmitter.

The *Prinz Eitel Friedrich* acted as the convoy leader. She was followed by the *Markomannia*, *Kormoran*, *Staatssekretär Kraetke*, *Gouverneur Jaschke*, *Longmoon* and *Ahlers*. At 6.30 p.m., the German cruisers weighed anchor and followed. The *Scharnhorst* led the van, ahead of the *Gneisenau*, *Nürnberg*, *Emden*, and *Titania*. During the night some of the convoy strayed out of line, and at dawn the *Nürnberg* was detached to round them up again. The sprawling convoy then worked eastward at eight knots with all ships slowed down to the cruising speed of the slowest merchantman.

At 8.00 a.m., the *Scharnhorst* ran up signals which brought the news and jubilation to the *Emden*'s officers and crewmen: EMDEN DETACHED . . . GOOD LUCK.

A second signal was sent from the flagship: MARKOMANNIA . . . FOLLOW THE EMDEN.

Both ships broke from the line and headed south, working up to 18 knots as the *Markomannia* was the fastest merchantman in the Far East.

The Far Eastern Squadron disappeared over the blue

eastern horizon, and von Müller watched the last traces of black smoke which lingered for a short time afterwards. It was the last time he would ever see von Spee and the squadron. Before the end of the year they would all end in a watery grave after exacting a frightening toll of men and ships.

As Winston Churchill wrote later of their exploits: "They certainly did their duty well."

Now they were loose upon the oceans, with every ship an enemy. Yet, strangely enough, the British and their allies had no idea as to where they were or where they were bound. It would not be long before they found out.

4

The Naval Plans of 1914

In order that the reader may more fully understand a situation on the world's oceans that would permit the warships and isolated raiders of Germany to run at large for such a long time without being brought to action, it is necessary to review the naval strategy of Britain, as well as the military and naval strategy of Imperial Germany.

To do so, we must go back almost to the beginning of the twentieth century.

The Chief of the German General Staff, until his retirement in 1905, was one of the great military strategists of all times, Graf Alfred von Schlieffen. He devised the tactical plan which was supposed to guarantee a war victory in Europe, but he died two years before it went into effect.

The Schlieffen Plan envisioned a two-front war in Europe, with the concentration of most of Germany's strength and her best troops along the Western Front; facing the ill-equipped Russians on the Eastern Front would be several divisions of reservists. The plan called for a quick, decisive victory. German troops would be hurled against France, not against the fortresses from Belfort to Verdun, but through Belgium and Holland. The troops would then wheel south, bypassing the French forts, and with a series of outflanking movements would sweep around Paris, and then turn to trap the French armies on the Germans' left flank.

It was considered a great plan, and it almost worked. Schlieffen was a great tactician but he never foresaw the

consequences if the German army bogged down, or what would happen if some subsequent Chief of Staff were to modify the plan to suit his own particular ideas for outflanking the French. Both these things happened.

The Schlieffen Plan was an army plan. It relegated the German Navy to a secondary force. It was no secret that the General Staff and the Kaiser had made no aggressive plans whatsoever for the navy. The military group did not believe that a war would last long enough for the navy to be of any use, although after 1906 Germany had continued to build a formidable navy at a breathtaking pace. Battleships began to slip off the ways at Kiel in rapid succession. They were modern and fast, well-armoured and heavily gunned.

There were two reasons for the German naval buildup. Grand Admiral Tirpitz, the architect of the new German Navy, a man of unusual and outstanding ability, had an influence with the High Command that no other naval officer had ever exercised before. Tirpitz proposed to the military that in event of war he could utilize his powerful fleet with an early run into the North Sea, sail down through the English Channel, and immobilize the French ports, thus stopping any support from England to the French, and protecting the movement of the German "right" flank into France. His plans were dismissed, but he was informed by Berlin that Germany would be fighting a two-front war, and that part of the overall plan was to isolate the two fronts in France and Russia. Germany would ally herself with Turkey and build the Berlin-to-Bagdad railroad, to help contain the Russians on the southern flank. Von Tirpitz was to use his great battleships as fortresses, stretched in a chain across the eastern face of the North Sea, in order to stop the movement of ships into the Baltic to aid Russia.

Von Tirpitz then attempted to interest the government in building a mighty fleet of submarines to harass British and French shipping, but again he was laughed down. As a result, at the start of the war Germany had fewer submarines than the third-rate Italian fleet. Still, the old Admiral plunged ahead building the great battleships and creating several high-speed cruisers and light cruisers for duty on Germany's far-flung foreign stations. No one thought the coming war would last

long enough to worry about these warships in far-away waters, and as a result no plans were made for them.

By the beginning of 1914, Germany had constructed a surprisingly large Home Fleet. Headed by the flagship, *Friedrich der Grosse*, the Home Fleet contained three battle squadrons made up of 23 battleships, 4 battlecruisers, 6 light cruisers, 67 destroyers, 21 submarines and a large number of gunboats, tenders, and supply vessels. In the Mediterranean, she had only one battlecruiser and one light cruiser, because the Mediterranean was to be controlled by the Austro-Hungarian fleet, comprising 14 modern battleships, 6 light cruisers, 24 destroyers, 6 submarines, 5 armoured cruisers and a host of gunboats and supply ships.

But Britain had not been idle. She had worked feverishly to match German capital ship with capital ship, unaware that the German Home Fleet had been relegated to defensive action only. She wanted to be sure that the Germans would not break through and be free to roam the high seas.

By 1914 Britain had in the wake of the flagship *Grand Duke* a total of 29 battleships in the Grand Fleet alone. This mighty force was augmented by the Second and Third Fleets known as the Harwich Force, with 30 battleships. (Relatively few of these battleships were new, however. Many had been built at the turn of the century.) The strength of the three fleets on duty in British home waters was 59 battleships, 4 battlecruisers, 48 cruisers, 19 light cruisers, 57 destroyers, 94 torpedo boats and torpedo-boat destroyers, and a large number of gunboats and supply ships. Britain had naval superiority to spare.

Down on the Mediterranean Britain had agreed to leave most of the action to the French; she nevertheless maintained a considerable strength there, primarily because of Austria and Turkey and the dubious neutrality of Italy.

Winston Churchill was not satisfied with the naval arrangement in the home waters. He felt that he needed more cruisers to augment the battleships. With their great speed and heavy armament they could attack and retreat and sail great distances in a short time, should hit-and-run tactics be necessary. He therefore called in his best cruisers from all the foreign stations.

This left the foreign stations without the speed and the strength to take care of the few German cruisers that were based abroad. As mentioned earlier, it was the opinion in British Government circles that the German cruisers on the high seas would have no place to go in the event of war, and that they would eventually surrender or be interned in some neutral port.

This did not happen. Von Tirpitz, realizing he could not sail the Home Fleet into battle, allowed his cruisers in the colonies to plan for action against the enemy, and he secretly supplied them with shells, other ammunition, and torpedoes. He made sure that his friend von Spee was made commander of the only German squadron on the High Seas, because both men believed in aggressiveness and not defensiveness.

Two other fleets must also be considered as important factors. First, there was the Royal Australian Navy. It was composed of a new battlecruiser (the most powerful in the world at that time), 3 cruisers, 3 destroyers, and 2 submarines. When war was declared, the Australian fleet immediately came under the command of the British Admiralty.

The other fleet was the powerful Japanese Navy. Japan had 2 new battlecruisers, 18 battleships, 9 armoured cruisers, an amazing 63 light cruisers, some 30 torpedo boats, and 14 submarines. She also had several very old battleships which she used for coastal defence and gunnery training. It was no wonder that von Spee, when faced by the threat of Japanese aggression, elected to leave the German islands in the Pacific and head for South American waters.

In addition, New Zealand possessed 3 small destroyers, not much larger than coastal gunboats, while the Russians had the 2 cruisers mentioned earlier. These Russian ships with two Japanese cruisers would come under British command in the Far East.

Added to this mighty array were a number of British, French and German cruisers, stationed in African, Asian, and South American waters.

The most powerful was von Spee's group, but the British Admiralty believed that any combination of their foreign station forces could easily cope with the Germans. This mistaken thinking was to be very costly. Britain had withdrawn

her fastest cruisers from her colonies, and France had only several second-rate cruisers, which were keeping as close to port as possible in the East Indies.

At the beginning of the war, the German cruisers *Dresden* and *Karlsruhe* were at Port au Prince in the West Indies. Both escaped a British blockade which had been specifically sent out to intercept them.

The cruiser *Leipzig* was on duty off the Chilean coast of South America. The *Königsberg* was based in German East Africa. A small gunboat, the *Eber*, was in German East Africa, and a small destroyer, the *Geier*, was *en route* to the waters of the Bismarck Archipelago.

Three British cruisers, *Chatham*, *Weymouth*, and *Dartmouth*, were stationed off the East Coast of Africa to watch the *Königsberg*. They failed. On South Atlantic duty were the cruisers *Good Hope*, *Monmouth*, *Glasgow*, and *Ontranto*.

This then was the disposition of the world's naval might in August, 1914. This arrangement of strength was a matter of great concern to von Spee and von Müller. It was of even greater concern to the people of Australia, who were panic-stricken when they learned that von Spee had escaped Tsingtao. They believed that the Germans would attack only two places now that they were on the loose: Australia and New Zealand. Heated exchanges with the British Admiralty did little to calm their fears. The Admiralty had enough problems attempting to mass enough strength to contain the German Home Fleet.

Winston Churchill believed that his cruisers on the distant seas were sufficient in number and strategically well enough placed to keep the enemy marauders under control. He was also convinced that, since the Germans had no way in which to get the prodigious amounts of coal they required, they would soon be brought to bay. He summed up the situation in typical Churchillian language: "They are like cut flowers in a vase, fair to see yet bound to die, and die very soon if the water is not constantly renewed."

Churchill informed the Australian Government that the Admiralty had seven major assignments to perform, all of which would require warship protection in various parts of the world. These seven assignments included the movement of

Canadian troops from Quebec to England; the movement of the New Zealand convoy to Australia; the convoy of New Zealand and Australian troops to Europe; the convoy of British Far Eastern garrisons to Europe; the convoy of Indian troops to relieve the Far Eastern garrisons; an expedition to subdue German Samoa, and an expedition to capture German New Guinea.

Clearly, the most important job of the Navy in foreign waters was to ensure that troop movements were protected. Possible action by the German cruisers was dismissed as unlikely. The Admiralty knew of five German bases in the islands of the Pacific: Yap, Apia, Nauru, Rabaul, and Angaur. Each base boasted a powerful wireless transmitter, and it was agreed by the Admiralty that the first naval action in the East should be the destruction of these wireless bases. Then it would be relatively easy to listen to German wireless transmission from their warships, and this would in turn lead British Squadrons to their whereabouts.

The British did indeed attack all these bases and reduce the transmitters to rubble. But von Spee had forbidden his squadron to break radio silence, and the British were baffled by the total absence of wireless communication among the Germans in the Pacific. Admiral Jerram took the Asiatic Squadron to the Island of Yap, because it was thought possible that von Spee was hiding there. Jerram had never heard of Pagan, and he sailed for Yap leaving a token force behind him at the time the *Emden* was ready to make her move.

The Admiralty was in a dilemma. It wished to send its African east coast cruisers to augment the Aden force in protecting the proposed Indian convoys, but this was impossible because the *Königsberg* was still loose. It would have also liked to send the South Atlantic Squadron to Canada, to assist in convoy duty from Quebec and Halifax to Liverpool. But, this too was impossible, as *Dresden* and *Karlsruhe* were at large in the Atlantic.

The Australian squadron, which might have been detached to search out von Spee, was needed to support the Anzac assaults in New Guinea and Samoa. As a result, the Germans were free to roam the seas. They had only to hide and strike.

The vastness of the Indian and Pacific Oceans and the multitude of islands offered them shelter with very few possible checks on their actions.

Called before Parliament to account for the Admiralty's failure to bring the solitary wanderers to book, Churchill said: "Von Spee has no means of docking his ships or exacting any serious repairs, whether necessitated by battle or by steaming . . . the wear and tear on modern ships is considerable and the difficulties multiply with every month out of dock."

Churchill and his Admiralty staff stubbornly believed that by keeping a close control on the movement of coal and other supplies in the Far East, the surrender of von Spee would be quickened. But the Australians found this policy unacceptable. They were closer to von Spee, and concern was much greater in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne than it was in Bristol or London. In any event, they protested again and again. And when the Admiralty sent the Australian squadron to New Guinea, leaving the country unprotected by sea, protests grew louder and louder. The Admiralty, and Churchill in particular, was subject to a great deal of abuse.

Aware of the gathering storm, Churchill consulted Sir Henry Jackson, a staff vice-admiral with the reputation of being a top naval technician. Jackson felt that von Spee's most likely course would be to travel to the Marshall Islands, then to the west side of South America, finally heading around the Horn for a dash to Europe and a reunion with the German Home Fleet. (He was right.) He went on to say that von Spee would never venture as far south as Australia and New Zealand, because the distances were too vast and coal supplies unavailable.

Churchill was convinced. He had confidence in Jackson, and the two leaders worked out the probabilities of naval action and naval stalemate. Churchill then attempted to placate the Australians but with little success. He pointed out the difficulties facing the Admiralty in trying to ensure the protection of British lifelines, as well as the protection of allied trade routes.

"The inconvenience in the other parts of the world just has to be faced," he told the Australians. "I admit it is serious."

Although Churchill glossed over the German cruiser problem in order to keep the Empire calm, he thought differently

about the matter. In his memoirs of 1914 he wrote that he had always realized the "insuperable difficulty" in bringing the Germans to action, because of the great speed of their cruisers.

"The problem of the Admiralty was delicate and complex," he explained after the war was over.

You could make scare schemes which would show that von Spee might turn up with his whole squadron almost anywhere. On the other hand, we could not possibly be strong enough every day and everywhere to meet von Spee. Therefore we either had to balance probabilities and run risks or reduce our movements and affairs to very narrow limits.

Absolute security meant something like absolute paralysis. We decided deliberately to carry on our affairs and take the risk. After all, the oceans were as wide for us as they were for von Spee.

But the Australians and the New Zealanders were not convinced. And one of their most outspoken leaders was a man who could have been court-martialled for his utterances. Admiral George Edwin Patey, the Plymouth-born, 55-year-old commander-in-chief of the Australian squadron, disagreed violently with Churchill over the Far Eastern naval strategy. Furious at the fact that von Spee and his squadron had been permitted to escape in the first place, he opposed the decision to let von Spee wander where he willed, without any effort being made to pursue him and bring him to action.

Admiral Patey had been appointed to his post in 1913 by the same Admiralty he was now criticizing. A superb artillery specialist, he was assigned to Australia to form an Australian squadron, and he arrived at the continent aboard the new battlecruiser *Australia* which was to be his flagship. Patey went about building up the Australian Navy from scratch. He ordered new ships. He set up training schools, modelled after the British system. He called for recruits, and established training programmes on shore and at sea that were vigorous and severe. By the time the war broke out he knew that he had a group of eager sailors and good gunners.

Shortly before the war began, Patey discussed at considerable length with the Australian Naval Board the problem of the German Far Eastern Squadron and, in particular, the question of what to do with the German possessions in the Bismarck Archipelago.

He had strongly advocated that, in the event of war, the Australian squadron should immediately move into the Bismarck Archipelago, seek out von Spee, and destroy him. He never thought that the weak Asiatic squadron could have contained von Spee at Tsingtao. Von Spee was too clever to be trapped and, even if blockaded, he could probably have fought his way through.

He believed that von Spee would stay in the islands where he had protection and coaling facilities. Patey knew that his own squadron was strong enough and fast enough to smash the German cruisers, even if they were all concentrated into one fighting force.

Admiral Patey had good reason for his aggressive attitude. His flagship, *Australia*, was the fastest and most modern battlecruiser at sea. Built less than two years before the war and commissioned only a few months before the hostilities began, she boasted a speed of more than 29 knots from engines that developed 44,000 horsepower. Displacing 18,750 tons, she was 580 feet long and heavily armoured with as much as ten inches of armour plate protecting her four main gun turrets. She mounted a total of eight 12-inch guns, fore and aft, sixteen 4-inch guns along her sides, and she carried three torpedo tubes in addition. With her 12-inch guns, she could fire a broadside of six guns, each one hurling an 850-pound shell more than 15 miles with amazing accuracy. The destructive power of a 12-inch shell was formidable; a shell fired 10,000 yards would be destructive to anything within a 160-yard radius. For close-in fire support, the *Australia* could fire 128 4-inch shells a minute, each shell weighing 38 pounds.

She was so powerful that she could out-gun, out-run, out-maneuvre any ship afloat; she was capable of taking on the entire Far Eastern Squadron alone and could have pounded each ship to pieces from the horizon without even getting within torpedo range.

Admiral Patey, aware of his battlecruiser's capability, wanted to find von Spee at the very beginning and destroy him once and for all. Had he done so, what a difference there would have been in the naval war.

But Patey was overruled. In the Australian Government's Official History of the War, the following passage is interesting: "The Admiralty would not allow him to hunt down the German cruiser squadron whose position he had estimated correctly within a fortnight after the outbreak of hostilities. Instead, he was sent to escort expeditions which were to annex the German island groups until November 1914, before returning to European waters."

So Patey took his powerful squadron to assist the Australian troops in attacking New Guinea and Samoa. Besides the battlecruiser, he had with him the new cruisers *Melbourne*, *Sydney* and *Encounter*. The cruiser *Brisbane* had concluded her trials in Scotland and was *en route* to join the squadron. Six destroyers were in the group: *Paramatta*, *Yarra*, *Warrego*, *Huon*, *Swan* and *Torres*. There were also two submarines, *AE-1* and *AE-2*, two gunboats, *Protector* and *Gajundah*, two sloops, *Fantome* and *Una*, and the fast torpedo boat, *Countess of Hopetown*. Augmenting this powerful force were three ageing New Zealand destroyers, *Psyche*, *Pioneer* and *Pyramus*. Their top speed was a bare 20 knots and when Patey was ordered to the islands, they were left on the Australian station to protect the movement of first New Zealand troops to Australia. Then when Australia's First Contingent of 30,000 troops was ready for departure to Europe, the Admiralty promised that more ships would be found to escort the convoy, particularly on the lonely voyage across open seas between Fremantle and Ceylon.

But the Australians still believed that von Spee could come down on them and, with ships and men away, subdue the whole continent. As a result, the troops remained in Australia, although sorely needed in the Middle East. And so far they had not even heard of the cruiser *Emden*. Even at that moment, she was making her solitary way toward their shores and looking for trouble.

5

The Long Trip to Bengal

After leaving the Far Eastern Squadron off Pagan, the *Emden* and the *Markomannia* sailed eastward around Saipan and then turned south to the Palau Islands. So as not to be spotted from the Palau shore, von Müller kept both ships fifty miles to the east — then circled westward to the Island of Peleliu, and then south to Angaur.

At the lovely Island of Angaur, where the shores rise precipitously from the green-blue water and are entirely covered by vines and dense foliage, the *Emden* moored in a sheltered lagoon beneath the white clouds that forever crown the breathtakingly beautiful islands. No sooner had the anchors dropped into the lagoon than swarms of natives, paddling their dugouts, rushed to the sides of the ships. The men were naked except for their loincloths, and almost all the women were unclothed, only one or two wearing dancing skirts of fern. Their bodies were like glowing copper. Their dark hair was long and black and hung down over their firm pointed breasts. Their teeth were darkened by betel-nut juice. It was a most tempting display to the sailors, who had been without female companionship for a considerable stretch of time.

“May I go ashore and reconnoitre?” asked Lauterbach, his black moustache twitching at the thought of the captures he might make on the island.

“You’ll never come back, if I let you go now,” von Müller laughed.

But he relented. He permitted Lauterbach to head a party

of sailors to search for water, breadfruits, and, much to everyone's surprise, Lauterbach did return to the *Emden*.

The sailors returned in the long slender dugouts which strangely resembled the early Scandinavian longships with their high, heavily-carved prows. Some of them carried garlands of hibiscus, and others had been given souvenirs of Trochus shell which the old women of the village cleaned for mother-of-pearl, the main industry of the island. A German agent, dirty and greasy, lived on Angaur, supervising a phosphate plant which he was now closing because of the war. He told von Müller he would stay on the island. He had no desire to return to civilization, and there were many on the *Emden* who wished they could have taken his place.

While the shore explorations were in progress, the *Emden* filled her coal bunkers from the *Markomannia*'s supply. While this was going on, the wireless room received a coded signal, but von Müller would at first not allow radio silence to be broken. Too many had been fooled in this manner. The ship was about seventy-five miles away, and according to the wireless room no signals had been heard from any other vessel closer than a distance of three to four hundred miles. The ship in question had not identified herself, but kept repeating a coded signal every five minutes.

Finally the *Emden* broke silence and asked for her identification.

Princess Alice, crackled the reply. This was a ship that should have been *en route* from Manila to South America according to plans. Von Müller decided to intercept her at $134^{\circ}20'E$ and $7^{\circ}N$, ten miles due east of the Island of Peleliu and twenty-five miles north-east of Angaur. If she was the 10,000-ton *Princess Alice*, she would not be able to enter Angaur lagoon. But von Müller was careful. When he spotted her, he wanted to have steam up, and the *Markomannia* out of sight, just in case.

He brought the *Emden* around from the south-east toward the huge liner, hull down on the horizon. Circling her cautiously, the *Emden* closed in, but only after distinguishing the flags of the North German Lloyd line. She was indeed the *Princess Alice*.

"Your orders were to sail to Valparaiso," von Müller informed her skipper when he came over the rail from his ship's boat.

"But I'm fully loaded with coal and food, and we have a cow aboard," said the skipper.

He asked von Müller not to be angry because he had good news for him. The *Princess Alice* had been *en route* from Singapore to Hong Kong with a cargo of English gold bullion, but when the war news became serious, the captain had headed the ship for Manila instead, and turned the gold over to the German consulate there.

Von Müller didn't need supplies, but he wanted the cow. He loved fresh milk with his tea, so the transfer was made, the cow being tethered to the deck aft. The *Emden* was beginning to look more and more like a coastal tramp steamer, rather than a modern light cruiser. She returned to Angaur while the *Princess Alice* cruised beyond the island. Von Müller was awaiting the arrival of the small destroyer *Geier*, which had been ordered to the rendezvous some five weeks previously, but had not yet arrived from her station in East Africa.

It was now August 15 and the *Emden* radio picked up a distant newscast that cast a pall of gloom over the ships. The Japanese were demanding the unconditional surrender of Tsingtao within seven days. The demand was couched in the very words that had been written twenty years before when the Japanese had been ordered out of Port Arthur.

On August 16 the *Geier* arrived and von Müller could hardly believe his eyes. She had been utterly neglected. Her guns were rusty and her two torpedo tubes were green with corrosion. Her hull was covered with barnacles. Her officers and crew were unshaven and unwashed, and their clothing was ragged and filthy. Laughter of native women wafted from the cabins. The decks were oily, and the masts unpainted and rotting. Von Müller called the *Geier's* commander, Leutnant Eric Grasshop, and the executive officer, Leutnant Albert Sauerneck, to his cabin and admonished them at length.

Yet when he heard their full story, he was inclined to forgive them. They had been on East African river patrol for several years, virtually ignored by the German Army which was

running affairs in East Africa. They were denied supplies and assistance, and when the order reached them to proceed across the Indian Ocean and through the East Indies to join von Müller, they eagerly departed, but with hardly enough coal to get them to the rendezvous. By using their sails, they had been able to manage after a voyage of extreme hardship.

Von Müller issued them coal and supplies from the *Markomannia*, and ordered them not to shoot their guns or torpedoes for fear they would blow up. Then he sent them to Honolulu to be interned. They made port months later.

At twilight the *Emden* departed, and with the *Markomannia* and *Princess Alice* trailing at twenty-five miles' distance, headed south-west through the uncharted waters toward the distant Molucca Sea and the Island of Celebes between New Guinea and Borneo. In the morning, the *Princess Alice* was nowhere in sight. She had become lost in the night, and von Müller was unwilling to break radio silence again in an attempt to find her. Deciding that if she could not follow a course on the open sea she would never be able to follow him through the tortuous channels soon to come, he abandoned her.

The run to the Molucca Sea was smooth and uneventful, and it was reached early on the morning of August 22. The equator was crossed at noontime with a ritual of band-playing and singing which raised the spirits of the men to a high level.

Amazing as it may seem, the *Emden* and *Markomannia* had not once spotted another ship on this lonely run. Unless one has traversed this vast water wasteland it is impossible to describe its tremendous scope and loneliness. Water stretched endlessly in all directions for thousands and thousands of miles, the blue surface broken only by the line of the horizon and the occasional outcropping of coral or a volcanic cone of greenery.

But at 4.30 p.m., August 22, the *Emden* passed a vessel which was five miles off to starboard. It was the first one that had been seen and she was Japanese. The *Emden* unfurled the British White Ensign and passed without making a signal of recognition. Japan at this moment was declaring war on Germany, and if von Müller had known this he would have sunk the vessel. But he was not to learn of it until the next day.

At this moment, von Spee had reached Eniwetok atoll and

had laid a course for Majuro in the Marshalls. The *Nürnberg* was preparing to leave the Far Eastern Squadron temporarily and dash to Honolulu to send messages to San Francisco ordering coal supplies to the west coast of South America. When she had completed this assignment she was to rejoin von Spee, near distant Christmas Island. So far von Spee had not been spotted, and the Allies had no idea whatsoever of his destination.

It was on this day also that von Müller discovered that someone had forgotten to put a supply of soap aboard the *Emden*. He chided von Mücke, but added that since it was wartime he would postpone his first officer's court martial until after the end of hostilities. Laughing heartily, the two inseparable men turned to the job at hand, guiding the *Emden* and her consort through the treacherous waters of the Moluccas, where tides run to twenty feet and vicious currents swirl unrelentingly.

A sigh of relief came from the navigators and the helmsmen when the ships cleared the surging waters of the Manipa Strait between the Islands of Buru and Ceram and arrived safely in the tranquil Banda Sea. Then the *Emden* headed toward the Island of Timor, keeping her speed down to eight knots because of the danger of uncharted reefs. At night her lights were extinguished and she crawled like a ghost ship through the iridescent seas, as she moved closer and closer to enemy sea lanes.

On August 24 the *Emden* reached the Nusa-Bassi Straits, located north-east of Timor and close to the Island of Wetar in the Lesser Sunda Islands. Here she was to meet the collier *Tannenfeld*, which had been in Batavia prior to the outbreak of war and had been ordered to this rendezvous by von Müller.

But the *Tannenfeld* was nowhere in sight. Von Müller cruised back and forth attempting to find her, yet unwilling to break radio silence. Then he coaled again from the *Markomannia*, taking on 450 tons. While some men worked, others swam. Still others rowed to shore and, avoiding the snake-infested swamps, reached the jungle to gather grass and leaves for the cow, Bertha, which von Müller now transferred to the *Markomannia*, together with the chickens, ducks, and piglets which the natives at Angaur had bestowed on the crew for favours received.

After the coaling, the two ships steamed toward the Flores Sea, keeping about fifty miles north of the Lesser Sunda Islands. At this point the *Emden* had completed 1,700 miles of sailing since leaving Pagan. Meanwhile von Spee had reached the Marshall Islands, his movements being still unknown to the British.

Continuing to the south-west the *Emden* sighted the Island of Djampea, an atoll midway between the Sunda Group and the Celebes, and as she approached the island on the 27th an alert lookout spotted a battleship dead ahead. Sirens sounded, and "action stations" blared throughout the ship.

Von Müller quickly ordered steam up in all the boilers and full speed ahead. His eyes were glued to his binoculars as he stared through the slits in the conning-tower armour plate. The distance to the battleship was seven miles, and if she had been alert with steam up she could have blasted the *Emden* out of the water. But von Müller was relying on speed and surprise.

The heliograph blinked from the *Emden*, and a return signal identified the warship as Dutch, and requested the *Emden* follow her to harbour. The *Emden* followed, forward guns trained on her just in case, until the Dutchman turned into a lagoon known as Koepang Bay. A number of thatched houses, a prominent longhouse, and a crescent sandy beach alive with natives, disclosed the presence of a jungle village.

The Dutch ship was the *Tromp*. She wasn't much larger than a cruiser (5,300 tons), but she had two 9.4-inch guns on the foredeck, four 6-inch guns along the sides in babettes and ten 12-pounders. She was also generously equipped with torpedo tubes.

Captain Koopman welcomed the *Emden* officers aboard his ship. He wheezed through glass after glass of Geneva gin, and mouthfuls of barbecued pork tidbits and greasy squares of fried tropical fruit. After shoving a tremendous fillet of fish into his fat mouth, he informed von Müller that the "missing" *Tannenburg* had been overhauled by his *Tromp* and escorted to internment. The fat Koopman said he was trying to be friendly to the Germans, but that sending a collier into neutral waters was dangerous business. In fairness to the belligerents he had seized her, but had set her crew free.

This encounter was important, because as soon as the *Emden* had sailed on the *Tromp* informed Batavia that a German warship was loose in the Netherlands East Indies. The British laughed the report off, but the Australians were convinced that a scouting cruiser of von Spee's had indeed been sighted. The howl that went up there could be heard in London.

The *Emden* continued into the Flores Sea, zig-zagging on a course that would take her north of Sumbawa Island around Lombok, and then south by south-west through the Lombok Straits between Lombok and Bali which connected the Bali and the Flores Seas to the Indian Ocean.

On August 28 the *Emden* cleared the treacherous strait, but instead of heading west and north-west along the coast of Java towards the Indian Ocean, von Müller deliberately set a course south-west away from all shipping.

He had planned a trick that was to infuriate the British. He would construct a fourth funnel on the *Emden* so that she would resemble the British cruiser *Yarmouth*. He also planned to camouflage the typically German, sharply pointed prow by a vertical line of paint, the colour of the ocean, so as to conceal her German lines. After a day's run, he stopped the *Emden*, and the crew got to work making the changes. When they were completed the *Markomannia* signalled: AHOY YARMOUTH. The imitation perfect, von Müller then retraced his steps to the Java coast and headed north-west for the trade routes that lay ahead.

By August 30 the *Emden* had made good time on her voyage to reach the sea lanes of the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal. She had moved to within 400 miles of Padang, an important trading centre and capital of the Island of Sumatra.

Off Sumatra, there lies a chain of islands, 800 miles long and between 50 and 75 miles offshore. The channel between the two was a busy area, and its waters were deep yet calm, because the islands protected the route from the Indian Ocean on the west. Von Müller kept the *Emden* and her consort in this channel, close to the chain, but he could not avoid the large number of small mail boats and coastal traders that were working among the islands.

At ten o'clock that night the *Emden* received the disturbing

news that the Japanese had blockaded Tsingtao and had landed troops on the mainland near Lunghow, about 150 miles north-east of the colony. Also, and more serious, Batavia radio was reporting that a Dutch coastal ship had spied a four-stacker warship between Sumatra and Java the day before. This, of course, was the disguised *Emden*.

British Naval Headquarters at Singapore heard the Batavia report and pressed for more details, which were not forthcoming. There was no British warship of any size in that vicinity – nothing in fact for a thousand miles. If the Dutch coastal ship was to be believed, von Spee must be lurking off Java or Sumatra, and the cruiser *Hampshire* was dispatched from her station in the Bay of Bengal, with orders to travel to the west coast of Sumatra at maximum speed, to search out and identify the warship. The *Hampshire* was no match for the *Emden* or any other of von Spee's cruisers, but the British had nothing else at the moment; the battlecruiser *Australia* was still in far-off New Guinea.

Hampshire was one of a series of heavy cruisers which the British built in 1903 before the days when high speed and manoeuvrability were deemed an essential ingredient of heavy warships. Her best speed was only 22 knots. She had plenty of armament, however: four 7.5-inch guns (two forward and two aft), six 6-inch guns and an assortment of 12-pounders and 3-pounders. On her afterdeck were two above-water torpedo tubes, and she carried a crew of 655 officers and men.

The *Hampshire* could never hope to get within range of the *Emden* unless she was lucky to catch her with steam down or at anchor. She could, however, take on a light cruiser like the *Königsberg*. (The British at Singapore believed that the ship the Dutch had spotted was the *Königsberg*, which had not been reported since July 31, when she had slipped from German East Africa.)

On August 31 the *Hampshire* crossed the northern tip of Sumatra while the *Emden* continued her north-west course, sighting a number of small coastal vessels which supplied fresh fish to the ships. On September 1 she was sixty miles due west of Padang, with her crew kept busy at gunnery practice and physical training.

On September 2 the *Emden* raised the small Island of Nias in the long island chain mentioned earlier. Crossing the equator she made Simalur the next day, and von Müller decided to coal and make repairs before venturing into the dangerous Bay of Bengal, just ahead. Simalur was the last island in the chain, and von Müller thought it would make a good base for future operations because it was so far off the beaten track.

Meanwhile *Hampshire* had swung around Sumatra Head and was now on a course towards the islands. Since there had been no further reports from Batavia concerning the unidentified warship, the officers in *Hampshire* began to doubt there was any substance to the original report.

Unaware that *Hampshire* was speeding toward him just over the horizon, von Müller cruised back and forth off the Simalur harbour of Langini before entering. It was impossible to see into this harbour, because it was entered through a narrow split in the shore almost totally cloaked by deep jungle. A ship was forced to squeeze through the tangle to reach the harbour, and von Müller was concerned that he might sail into a trap. So he cruised back and forth all that day and into the night before deciding to go into Langini at dawn.

There was no one there except a militant Dutchman who demanded the Germans leave or he would intern both ships and their crews. He was finally placated with a case of Munich beer. The two ships came together, and again the nightmarish duty of coaling began. None of the crew were permitted to leave the ship except for a detail of six men to fetch fresh water and fruit from a small village at the head of the lagoon harbour. Transferring 900 tons of coal by sack and canvas bags was appallingly hard work. It was under the direction of a young nobleman, Lieutenant Franz Josef, Prince von Hohenzollern, the ship's second torpedo officer.

While this was progressing the *Emden*'s wireless crew had been listening to constant wireless chatter between Singapore and a ship with the cipher QMD.

Hampshire was QMD, and her signals were getting closer and closer—not more than 100 to 150 miles away.

"Give her the same respect as a cobra in your cabin," von Müller told the wireless crew. "Try and get a bearing on her

and keep me advised every few minutes. Yes, and every time she makes a signal."

By late afternoon, the wireless room estimated *Hampshire* to be cruising close to the Sumatran coast and not more than 100 miles distant; she would be in the vicinity in about five to six hours.

At 10.00 p.m. the signals appeared to be coming from the other side of Simalur Island, and about midnight the search-lights of *Hampshire* stabbed the blackness of the skies as she searched the coves and inlets on Simalur's western coast. At one time *Hampshire* and the *Emden* were actually only five miles apart and, fortunately for the out-gunned British ship, the area of separation was a mountain range and not the open sea. Her lights and her coded wireless signals were working south, away from the *Emden*, and by morning she was well down the opposite side of the island chain and no longer a threat.

When the coaling was finished, the *Emden* and the *Markomannia* cleared Langini harbour and, with no strange ship to ruffle the surface of the sea, the two set a course to clear Sumatra's northern tip and slip into the busy Bay of Bengal. Von Müller had planned to keep his course slightly west of the Nicobar and Andaman Islands in order to creep up to the sea lanes running between Calcutta and Singapore, probably the busiest sea highways in the world. By September 8 the *Emden*, still heading for Calcutta, had reached a point close to the Andamans, when she overtook a smudge of smoke which turned out to be a Greek neutral, the *Pontoporus*.

She was carrying 6,500 tons of coal for Calcutta, and von Müller offered to buy it. As the Greek captain, Dimitri Polemis, was in no position to bargain, he agreed, and with Lauterbach and ten bluejackets on his ship, he pulled into the wake of the *Markomannia*.

Von Müller's incredible luck was again augmented when Lauterbach found on the *Pontoporus'* bridge a batch of up-to-date Calcutta newspapers listing the sailings and expected ship arrivals for the entire month of September. It was a brilliant example of the lack of censorship that plagued the British at the beginning of the war. The name of every ship was listed, and this permitted von Müller and his crew to plot each capture

without disturbing any neutrals. Von Müller was very touchy about neutrality. He did not desire to antagonize any nation, and thereby perhaps prolong the war.

Two days after this incident, at 8.00 a.m. on September 10, the *Emden*'s lookouts spotted smoke ahead. Leaving her brood behind, the *Emden* dashed forward at full speed and pounced upon the British freighter *Indus*.

HALT . . . DO NOT USE YOUR WIRELESS.

This was enough to force the *Indus* to heave to. She was boarded by ten sailors, led by Lieutenant Rod Schmidt. He signalled to von Müller by megaphone that she was a ship of 3,413 tons, running from Calcutta to Bombay and outfitted as a troopship and horse transport. She carried a cargo of rice, tea, and machinery parts to the value of £128,000. But most important of all, she was carrying a ton of fine Indian perfumed toilet soap. "Seize the soap," shouted von Müller, and his men laughed with glee.

The Second Officer of the *Indus* rounded up the crew at Schmidt's orders, and they were rowed to the *Markomannia*. There were forty-four Englishmen serving on the *Indus*, and it took until 1.15 p.m. to transfer them and their personal baggage. At 3.00 p.m. ten rounds were fired into the *Indus* below the waterline; it took her until 4.10 p.m. to settle beneath the waves in a great convulsive explosion. Her two lifeboats bobbed to the surface and they were sunk by gunfire, so that no trace of the sinking would be left.

Von Müller was irritable over the poor gunnery of his men in the sinking of the *Indus*. He was also concerned over the lengthy time it took to send her to the bottom. He decided that more gunnery practice was required and a new plan needed for disposing of a captured ship.

While working out his plans, the morning of September 11 brought a cry from the crows-nests: "Smoke at zero two zero."

The *Emden* surged forward and quickly closed upon the unsuspecting ship. From this moment on there would be no further rest for her.

Bengal Roulette

Graf von Spee reached Christmas Island, 1,400 miles south of Honolulu, at the end of the first week of September without having sighted any enemy warship or merchantman. In plotting his course over the loneliest areas of the South Pacific, he had skilfully managed to lead his squadron in secrecy, and now he felt isolated enough to anchor his ships for provisioning, repairs, and coaling operations. He was joined here by the *Nürnberg*, which had completed her mission to Honolulu by sending coded telegrams to Germany and San Francisco (the latter signals for coal and supplies to be sent to Valparaiso). For the benefit of the curious the *Nürnberg* officers let it be known they were returning to the Far East. Therefore, when they cleared Honolulu, they set her on a course north and then west from the Hawaiian Islands until well out of sight. Only then did they abruptly change direction southward for Christmas Island.

On her arrival the *Nürnberg* coaled quickly, and then sailed for the Fanning Islands, a group of atolls lying north of the Christmas group. She was accompanied by the *Titania*, which was equipped with cable-cutting machinery. At Fanning, the submarine cable connecting New Zealand to British Columbia was severed and, since the mail ship called only twice yearly at this lonely outpost of civilization, this hostile action would not be reported to the outside world for a long time. It was not believed that a broken cable at the Fanning Islands would be attributed to German marauders. And it wasn't.

The *Nürnberg* and the *Titania* returned to Christmas

Island, and the Germans, elated by the success of the raid, decided to expand their activity. The *Nürnberg* officers had been informed in Honolulu that New Zealand troops had taken the city of Apia in Samoa, a relatively simple operation as there was only token resistance. Since a German counter-attack was not even remotely thought of, the New Zealanders sailed from Apia with the Australian squadron, leaving only a handful of men to police the area. Samoa was 1,400 miles south-west of the Christmas Islands, but von Spee thought it worthwhile to show himself. It was a chance to throw the enemy off the scent. He ordered his squadron captains to ready their ships for the long trip to Samoa, and in the midst of his preparations he may have wondered how von Müller and the little *Emden* were faring.

They were doing just fine. Everyone had had a bath with the scented Indian soap from the *Indus*. Fresh meat had been served, and the cow Bertha was producing admirably – well enough, in fact, to furnish cream for the tea of the prisoners from the *Indus*, who were invited to participate in the regular afternoon tea aboard the ships. Von Müller was scrupulously correct with his prisoners, and made sure they were lodged comfortably and well fed. He was as popular among the prisoners as he was among his own men. The war at this moment seemed strange and unreal, a story-book war, where heroes were made and no one got hurt.

On September 11, the day after the *Indus* sinking, the *Emden*, with her false colours and her fourth funnel still in place, pounced upon the British freighter *Lovat*, a 6,000-ton ship.

“I’ll never forget the silly look on the face of the captain when he saw us hoist our German flag,” wrote von Mücke in his diary. “I would regret not to have seen it. For the numerous stables for horses and the accommodations for troops on this boat, we had no appreciation, and we submitted our questions about these and her supplies to the sharks. Business was brisk.”

Opening the sea cocks of the ship and then shelling her below the waterline was much too slow to suit von Müller, after his last experience. He ordered the boarding party to set dynamite charges in the hold, strong enough to open the bottom seams. While the charges were being set, *Emden* sailors checked

her cargo. The *Lovat* was carrying tinned meat, wheat, and rice valued at £60,000 for the British at Port Said. The canned meat was transferred to the *Markomannia* but the wheat and rice, not needed at this time, were consigned to destruction. The first shades of evening were drawing across the Bay of Bengal when tremendous explosions ripped the *Lovat* apart. She gave a convulsive gasp and slid beneath the water.

That night, as *Indus* and *Lovat* officers were drinking Munich beer and trading stories aboard the *Markomannia*, one of the more talkative sailors began telling of the ship concentrations at Calcutta and concluded the tale by revealing there were "three more ships like ours right behind us."

When told of the betrayal, von Müller chuckled for a moment and then said to von Mücke: "From now on we will feed beer to all our captured ships' officers. Beer for our imperial war effort shall be our slogan. It's strange it was never mentioned in my naval textbooks." Both men chuckled.

At 11.00 p.m. that same night of September 11, Lieutenant Geerdes, officer of the watch, was in the conning tower when the forward lookouts called through the voice pipe that lights were visible ahead and they appeared to be coming toward the *Emden*. Geerdes sounded the alert, and gun crews raced to their positions. No one spoke and hearts beat faster as the lights came closer; everyone wondered whether it was a merchantman or cruiser, friend or enemy, although there were very few friends left to the Germans at this time.

The *Emden* made a short circuit to port, and then closed alongside the ship, which had turned out to be a small freighter. All her lights were ablaze, indicating that the *Emden*'s presence on the Bay of Bengal was not yet known. Von Müller, now on the bridge to direct operations, signalled the ship by heliograph: STOP . . . DO NOT USE YOUR WIRELESS.

The merchantman stopped. The captain believed his vessel was to be checked by a British cruiser, because of the four stacks. And he got the surprise of his life as Lieutenant Gyssling boarded him with twenty German sailors, carrying rifles with bayonets.

She was the British ship *Kabinga*, of 4,657 tons, *en route* via Port Said to New York with a cargo of Indian rugs and wool.

Von Müller would have liked to sink her on the spot, but two things deterred him. First, she had a cargo consigned to the neutral United States, and he was reluctant to be the cause of any disruption in friendly United States-German relations. (At this time, these relations were excellent, particularly in San Francisco where German intelligence forces were working unhindered.)

Also the *Kabinga*'s skipper had his wife and three young children aboard. Von Müller was opposed to seizing the mother and children and placing them with the other prisoners. Some of his officers suggested that the woman and children be placed in a cabin on the *Markomannia*, but von Müller overruled them. He curtly told his officers that his war was not with women and children, that the *Markomannia* could be the object of an enemy attack, and that in such circumstances they would be innocent victims.

He decided to spare the *Kabinga*, and ordered Gyssling to take charge of her bridge and follow in the wake of the *Markomannia* and the *Pontoporus*. Gyssling had no sooner swung the *Kabinga* into line astern when the *Emden*'s alert lookouts once more reported lights on the northern horizon.

Action stations again sounded in the night, and the *Emden* sliced like a ghost through the calm waters of the Bay of Bengal, intent upon the quarry ahead. By the extent of her lights, she was a fair size, perhaps a small passenger liner. The *Emden*'s searchlights and heliograph signals brought her to a stop and Leutnant Zimmermann, with a dozen sailors, boarded her. He signalled the *Emden*: ENGLISH COALING STEAMER . . . KILLIN . . . 6000 TONS . . . INDIA COAL CALCUTTA TO BOMBAY . . . SPEED EIGHT TO NINE KNOTS . . . CREW THIRTY-FOUR.

Here was a rare prize indeed. An English ship loaded with coal which the *Emden* could always use. But von Müller was in a quandary. The lookouts were now reporting the lights of two and perhaps three other ships ahead. Any one of these could be a cruiser, and there were already too many officers and men serving as prize crews on the other ships. The *Emden*'s manpower was seriously depleted.

Von Müller decided therefore to sink the *Killin* as soon as daylight arrived. However, by 5.30 a.m., when the blackness

to the north-east had begun to turn to grey, the seas freshened and it took four hours to transfer the *Killin*'s crew to the *Kabinga*. After the last prisoner disembarked, Zimmermann and six seamen went to the engine room to remove the covers from the pipes leading to the outside of her hull, and the sea water rushed in. The watertight door leading to the boiler room was also opened to speed up the sinking. Had the seas been smoother, the Germans would have used dynamite, but this method was considered too dangerous in the circumstances, because of the coal-dust, which could create a blast violent enough to attract attention from distant ships.

The *Killin* rocked back and forth as the water rose in her tortured hull. Two shells were slammed into her bottom and she settled rapidly, her bow going under first, her masts slapping the waves, her screws raised into the air. Her funnels blew out the last smoke and dust; she stood for an instant on her bow and then slid under. Then, almost a minute later, long pieces of lumber shot from the depths, travelling vertically several yards into the air like arrows. Life preservers, smashed boats and other woodenware bubbled to the surface in a pool of oil. It was a typical sinking, and many eyes watched it with awe and sadness. No sailor likes to see a ship go down. Von Mücke mentioned it in his diary: "It's a queer feeling for a seaman to see a ship sinking. We, who have been trained to help every ship in need, are always touched by it."

The *Killin* with her cargo had no sooner found her resting place than the lookouts reported a faint smudge of smoke on the northern horizon. No other signs of activity were visible. The lights that had been seen in the night had disappeared with the breaking of day, and the ships from which they had once beckoned were now beyond the horizon. As von Müller remarked, you just couldn't get them all.

The *Emden*, steam up, moved ahead leaving her brood astern. The smudge was perhaps twenty-five to thirty miles away and it would take her almost an hour to reach it. As the cruiser drew closer, it was apparent that the unidentified ship was a big freighter. The two vessels closed rapidly, the *Emden* still flying the Union Jack and looking like the *Yarmouth*, with her four stacks.

The stranger was the 7,600-ton Harrison Line *Diplomat*, carrying 3,000,000 pounds of Indian and Assam tea to London, a cargo valued at £300,000. On her brilliant white bridge stood Captain Harold Bickerstaff, a veteran Harrison Line skipper. He saw the cruiser approaching at top speed, saw the British flag and the four funnels, and pulled the throaty whistle to welcome the passing ship. At that moment two shots exploded over the *Diplomat's* bow.

"What the bloody hell are they trying to do!" he screamed. "Are they trying to sink one of their own ships . . . send them a signal!"

Then Bickerstaff saw the Morse Lamp winking: STOP . . . DO NOT USE YOUR WIRELESS.

He stared in disbelief as he saw the German Eagle unfurl. He choked a command to "reverse" and then "full stop" the engines, and the *Diplomat* churned to a halt in the choppy seas. She was boarded minutes later by a squad under von Mücke himself, who was anxious to seize and study the ship's papers. He was assisted by Leutnant Witthoeft, who raced to the lower hold to take charge of the demolition party.

Von Mücke greeted Bickerstaff affably and explained that the *Diplomat* would be sunk, but that the crew of 80 would be transferred to the *Kabinga*.

"The *Kabinga*," moaned Bickerstaff. "Why . . . she's running just ahead of me . . . we've all walked into a trap . . . you Germans will murder us all."

"We'd like to do just that," retorted von Mücke, "but we happen to have a commander who frowns on bloodshed. Therefore we will take you to the *Kabinga* and in a week or so will set you free. Meanwhile you will be guests of His Imperial Majesty."

By 3.45 p.m. the dynamite charges had been set, and Witthoeft's party had returned to the *Emden*. At 3.55 p.m. the hull blew out of the *Diplomat*, and she settled beneath the waves in less than twenty minutes.

This sinking disturbed the entire English tea industry and shocked the London market. It drove the price of tea up to ninepence halfpenny a pound, more than twopence higher than its normal price. It also drove up the insurance rates on Eastern

commerce from 2 per cent to an incredible 8 per cent. Fear also caused a rise in the price of tin and rubber, since they too had to be transported across the Bay of Bengal from the Malay States and other adjacent producing areas.

Von Müller and his officers on the bridge would have watched the *Diplomat* sinking as the *Emden* circled a mile away, but the forward lookouts had once again sighted a smudge of smoke on the northern horizon. Leaving the other ships behind, in charge of Lauterbach on the *Markomannia*, the *Emden* raced ahead to greet the intruder. Unfortunately the ship turned out to be under Italian registry and her skipper, a Venetian, was furious at being halted. When Zimmermann went aboard (because she showed no flags at her staffs) the captain flew into an uncontrollable rage and had to be forcibly held down.

"All we want you to do is take some prisoners off our hands and take them to Calcutta," Zimmermann told the raging captain. He refused. He ordered the Germans off his ship, saying he would make an official protest to his consul in Calcutta.

"Let him go," von Müller signalled. Then to his watch officer he said: "As sure as fate he is going to report our presence on the Bay of Bengal. Make sure that at least one of our wireless crew is tuned to Calcutta radio at all times, day and night."

Overhauling the Italian steamer was an unavoidable blunder, von Müller knew, and there was no way now of rectifying the error. Within two days, British warships would be swarming into this area of Eastern Bengal and the *Emden* and her brood would be easy targets. Von Müller decided therefore to abandon the lucrative Calcutta approaches, and seek the enemy merchant marine in other areas of the great bay. It had occurred to him that traffic between Calcutta and Madras on the western side of the Bay of Bengal might be worth investigating, and he ordered Kloepper and Gropius to lay a course for the city of Puri, the great religious centre on India's east coast.

The turn to the west was no sooner completed than the lookouts reported another ship inbound to Calcutta. The *Emden*, her British flags waving, sailed past this ship which also turned out to be Italian. Von Müller did not stop her, but whistled

a greeting on the way by and continued on the new course. During the night, the other ships caught up to the *Emden*, and they all headed for Puri.

It was now the night of September 13 and a meeting with his officers convinced von Müller that he must make a decision soon concerning the disposition of the prisoners. There were too many mouths to feed and too many of his officers and men were not available for important duties on the *Emden*.

On September 14, Calcutta radio broadcast the news that a German raider was loose in the Bay of Bengal. An hour later, it broadcast that there was a good chance that the entire German Far Eastern Squadron was in the Bay (the Venetian who had reported the raider had noticed a group of smoke smudges on the southern horizon, the direction from which the enemy cruiser had come).

The news electrified the Admiralty in London, since it was believed that von Spee had moved east across the Pacific, although he hadn't been heard from since the *Nurnberg* had shown up unexpectedly in Honolulu. The Admiralty moved fast. They ordered the cruisers *Hampshire* and *Yarmouth* and the heavy Japanese cruiser *Chikuma* into the Eastern Bay of Bengal. Unfortunately, the *Yarmouth* developed engine trouble and had to limp into Penang for emergency repairs.

At this moment, von Spee attacked the port of Apia in Samoa, sinking one ship and bombarding shore installations. The Admiralty then decided that the warship in the Bay of Bengal must be a solitary raider and that *Hampshire* and *Chikuma* could take care of her. As events were soon to show, they might as well have stayed in port and saved their valuable fuel.

Churchill and the Anzacs

The appearance of the German cruiser in the Bay of Bengal, astride the British lifeline to India and the Far East, and the arrival of von Spee and his cruisers off Samoa, suddenly and profoundly disturbed all the Allied naval dispositions in Asiatic waters, Oceania, and in the East Indies. The situation was further complicated by the return of the cruiser *Königsberg* to the East African coast near Zanzibar where she was raising havoc with shipping. On September 20, after a short but impressive battle, the cruiser *Pegasus* had been beached by *Königsberg*. Plans for the movement of troop convoys from Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Singapore, Auckland, Wellington, Sydney, and Melbourne were thrown into utter confusion. The harried Admiralty was faced with the staggering problem of how best to redistribute its scanty and far-flung naval forces, badly weakened by the calling home of the best cruisers. The loss of the *Pegasus* raised a storm of protest in the British House of Commons, and Members of Parliament were demanding an accounting from the Admiralty, whose strategy was being severely criticized. Much of the blame fell on Churchill.

But not only in London was the storm against the Admiralty growing to historic proportions. The British Dominions, Canada, South Africa, India, Australia, and New Zealand were loud in their protests against a system that left their sea lanes unprotected and their coastal cities open to attack by the enemy. Nowhere did the bitterness reach such dimensions as in Australia and New Zealand.

The news of the *Emden's* appearance in the Bay of Bengal and the attack on Apia had hardly been received in Melbourne, Australia, on September 14, when the Australian cabinet was summoned into emergency session. It was a situation which the Australians had feared since the day that war started. German cruisers were in the oceans that surrounded Australia and her own navy was in far-off New Guinea.

The Government of Australia found itself in a difficult position. Troops which had been promised to the war effort, and which should have departed for the Middle East on August 26, were still marching on Australian parade squares because of government fears that not enough protection had been offered to the convoy. Meanwhile militant groups were itching for overseas duty, and loyal newspapers were screaming for action to help the Motherland in trouble.

The Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Joseph Cook, presided over the emergency session. He minced no words. Australia's 20,000 combat-ready troops would remain in home ports until the Admiralty promised better protection, and at the same time made a concerted effort to sweep the German cruisers from the Eastern seas. It was the same song that the Admiralty had been hearing since the first weeks of war.

The Honourable Edward D. Millen, Minister of State for Defence, agreed. Troops were ready at Melbourne, Sydney, Hobart, Brisbane, Adelaide, and Fremantle: thousands of horses were stabled alongside port warehouses; millions of tons of foodstuffs were ready for shipment; and a score or more merchantmen had been requisitioned for war duty. But nothing was to move.

The First Contingent had been ready since two weeks after the declaration of war, and plans for the convoy had been carefully drawn up. Horses were to be loaded first aboard the oldest merchant ships and sent to sea several days in advance of the troopships. All ships (with men, horses, and war material) were to rendezvous in St. George's Sound near Fremantle, Western Australia, before beginning the long haul across the Indian Ocean to Aden and up the Red Sea to Alexandria. An estimated twenty-six ships were to assemble in this first convoy for the more than 8,000-mile trip across the monsoon seas to Aden.

Added to the contingent from Australia, ten thousand New Zealand volunteers in twelve ships were ready to join the Australians.

But Australian fears were mirrored also in New Zealand, and the New Zealand troops which should have departed on August 26 remained in their home ports awaiting more adequate protection.

But the Admiralty could not spare more capital ships for Australian waters while von Spee was loose and the New Guinea campaign was proceeding. Reluctantly Their Lordships informed Australia that following the New Guinea campaign, the cruisers *Melbourne* and *Sydney* would be sent back home for convoy duty. Then, luckily, the Japanese entered the war on the Allied side. This meant that British cruisers in the China Seas could be deployed elsewhere, and Australia and New Zealand could have their own ships back to escort their troops.

The Admiralty suggested that the combined convoy should therefore be ready to sail on September 20, 1914, from Fremantle. To New Zealand the Admiralty promised that the old destroyers *Philomel* and *Psyche* would be dispatched to Wellington to convoy New Zealand ships across the Tasman Sea to a rendezvous near Adelaide. Later, the New Zealanders were to join the Australian ships at sea and head for St. George's Sound. New Zealand agreed, and the Admiralty and the British Government breathed a sigh of relief.

Churchill meanwhile wirelessly Admiral Patey ordering the cruisers *Melbourne* and *Sydney* to St. George's Sound to rendezvous with the troopships for sailing on September 20. He then signalled Admiral Jerram at Singapore that unless definite word on the whereabouts of von Spee was forthcoming by September 8, he was to send *Hampshire* and *Minotaur* to the Cocos Islands in the Indian Ocean to meet the Anzac convoy.

Two days later, Churchill changed his mind – and for a very good reason. The cruiser *Königsberg* had been reported sailing eastward across the Indian Ocean toward Australia, and he was well aware of the havoc that a cruiser could cause if it attacked a straggling convoy under cover of darkness. He therefore decided that the further protection of a battlecruiser was needed. Jerram was ordered to keep the *Minotaur* with him at

Singapore, and Patey told to be ready to sail his battlecruiser *Australia* to the Indian Ocean for convoy duty.

Australia and New Zealand agreed to these new arrangements and were ready to order the convoy to sail when the news broke of the *Emden* in the Bay of Bengal and the attack by von Spee at Samoa. Once again it was decided to keep the troops in their own homeland. They might be needed for home defence.

The Admiralty moved fast. The cruiser *Hampshire* sailed into the Bay of Bengal to search out the mysterious German warship. The battlecruiser *Australia* and the cruiser *Sydney* rushed to Rabaul, the capital of German New Guinea, to protect Allied troops against possible attack by von Spee.

The Japanese battlecruiser *Ibuki*, a modern warship of 14,600 tons with four 12-inch guns; eight 8-inch guns; fourteen 4.7-inch guns; four 14-pounders and three torpedo tubes, was signalled to leave her post in the China Sea and speed to Fremantle to assist in convoy duty. She was fairly fast, able to work up to 22 knots, and she had adequate armament to take care of any cruiser attacks, provided that such attacks were not under the cover of darkness.

But the stubborn Australian and New Zealand Governments turned down this proposal. The lone *Ibuki* was not enough protection. In a long convoy of some twenty to thirty miles in length, she would not have the speed to protect the line of ships from swift forays of enemy cruisers; and her guns over a long range would not be able to single out enemy from friend. Besides, the Australians distrusted the Japanese, ever fearful of a move into the Pacific Islands.

To add uncertainty at this critical time, the Australian submarine *AE-1* was reported missing at sea with all thirty-two hands and was presumed lost. No trace of her had been found in the Pacific Islands, and Australians linked this, their first loss of the war, to the presence of enemy cruisers.

Therefore the ambitious plans to have troops on the way to Europe by September 20 died ignominiously. The First World War was starting poorly in the Allied outposts. But the Admiralty was undaunted. It was decided to approach New Zealand with a new plan, in the belief that if she would consent to revised arrangements, Australia was sure to follow suit.

Since Admiralty proposals had been coldly received in New Zealand, it was agreed that the new proposal should be offered through the British Colonial Office. First, the New Zealand Government was advised that it was the overwhelming opinion in London that the German marauders would never venture as far south as New Zealand, as there was no place where they could coal and repair their ships.

With this assertion, the Colonial Office also revealed that by September 24 three destroyers would be dispatched to New Zealand by Admiral Patey to protect her troops. The New Zealand Government reluctantly agreed to this proposal. Churchill was relieved, but only for the moment.

On September 17 Sir Andrew Fisher was elected Prime Minister of Australia, and he appointed G. F. Pearce his Minister of Defence. Both men agreed that not one Australian soldier would leave port until the British Admiralty would protect the troop movements by a fleet of warships powerful enough to cover adequately all possible dangers that might be encountered.

Fisher, in his best oratory, confessed to the Australian press that he had had recurring nightmares in which he had seen his troopships at the bottom of the Indian Ocean, and thousands of boys floating on the surface of the waters with German cruisers racing through them. This melodrama kindled nightmares not only in Australia but in New Zealand, and thousands of wives and mothers besieged the governments to cancel the troop sailings.

Support came from an unexpected source — Governor General Sir Ronald Craufurd Munro Ferguson. Calling Churchill and the rest of the Admiralty a “bunch of blunderers,” he fired off a telegram to London which said: “How can you risk these young lives?” Then, in an unprecedented move for a royal representative, he sent a personal signal to the New Zealand Cabinet to “take a closer look at the unprotected seas around you before making any further moves.” As could be expected under such circumstances, the nervous New Zealand Government again cancelled the plans to sail her troops.

Churchill was exasperated, but as liaison chief between the British wartime Cabinet and the Admiralty, he was forced to

play a careful game to keep everyone on speaking terms while playing for time and ships. Britain needed troops. The Allies had failed to dislodge the German forces along the Aisne River and both sides were digging into trenches. The German submarine *U-9* had sunk the British cruisers *Aboukir*, *Cressy*, and *Hogue* off the Dutch coast with a loss of fourteen hundred men, and the House of Commons was demanding an explanation. Churchill was also being asked why he was holding three empty transports in Calcutta when they were needed to transport horses and much-needed field pieces for the Western Front. (He was holding them in port until *Hampshire* could track down the *Emden*.) To the government he sarcastically explained: "My government wants a special convoy for empty ships, but I should be very sorry to interrupt the offensive operations against the *Emden* for the sake of convoying three empty transports."

To his fellow members of the Admiralty he said: "I am inelined to recommend that these three should put to sea at night, with lights out, and then steer a wide track. It is one hundred to one they would get around safely and one thousand to one that two out of three would arrive safely . . . let me have your proposals on this matter."

Churchill was asked to explain the naval situation in the Far East, since the sorely needed Australian and New Zealand troops were still in their home ports. He answered:

The *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* have now been located near the Society Islands and I do not think there is need for the cruisers *Melbourne* and *Sydney* to remain in Australian waters. The *Sydney* should immediately be orderd to join *Hampshire*, *Yarmouth*, and *Chikuma* to hunt the *Emden*, and *Melbourne* should come here with the Australian-New Zealand convoy. Then, as soon as the Russian cruisers *Zemchug* and *Askold* finish their present duties, they should be sent to join *Hampshire*. This will give us seven cruisers searching for the *Emden*, and this will avoid the necessity of moving one of our three light cruisers now hunting the *Königsberg*. . . . Numbers are everything, and the extirpation of these pests is a most important object. . . .

What is the use of the destroyers *Psyche*, *Pyramus*, and *Philomel* remaining in New Zealand waters after the convoy has reached Australia? There is nothing but the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* to be considered, and they are sufficiently dealt with by the battlecruiser *Australia*, by the French cruiser *Montcalm*, by the First Japanese Squadron, and by the Second Japanese Squadron. On the other hand, I am suggesting that these three destroyers, together with the destroyer *Pioneer*, would be good for searching out the *Emden*, keeping them in company with the faster and more powerful ships.

I propose, therefore, that these four destroyers should accompany the Australian-New Zealand convoy to Indian waters and then join the seven cruisers under the *Hampshire* hunting the *Emden*. This will give us a total of eleven ships available to hunt the *Emden* a month from now. The necessary arrangements, to enable them to get to Colombo, can easily be made despite their limited fuel capacities. And in the event that the *Emden* is captured before this concentration is complete, all these vessels should be sent to assist in the hunt for the *Königsberg*. Or, conversely, if the *Königsberg* is caught, the three light cruisers should go over and join the *Emden* hunt. It is no use stirring about the ocean with two or three ships. When we have got cruiser sweeps of eight or ten vessels, running ten to fifteen miles apart, there will be some good prospect of gaining information on the whereabouts of the *Emden* in such a way as to bring her to action. I assure you that such large and decisive measures are much the cheapest and the most satisfactory in the end.

The government considered Churchill's suggestions, and, unable to spare any ships from the Home Fleet, and reluctant to remove any from the Dardanelles area of the eastern Mediterranean to help in convoy duty, was forced to accept them. There was no other alternative.

So critical was the situation in the Dardanelles, for instance, that the modern British cruiser *Defence*, which had been dispatched from that area to bolster the British South Atlantic

Squadron, was recalled to the Mediterranean. This decision was later to have a catastrophic effect.

The Admiralty, with the full support of the British Government, telegraphed Australia and New Zealand the following message: "The Admiralty adheres to the opinion that the dispatch of transports from the New Zealand and the Australian ports to the point of concentration at Fremantle is an operation free from undue risk." Both countries rejected the note and Churchill himself turned to the important job of trying to catch the elusive *Emden*.

The Captures Continue

But catching the *Emden* was easier said than done. She was an infinitesimal dot in a desolate region where distances are enormous. The Bay of Bengal is an area half the size of the European continent. The Indian Ocean is 28,375,000 square miles in extent. From Colombo in Ceylon to Rangoon in Burma, the distance is some 1,300 miles. Westward from Colombo to Aden and the entrance to the Red Sea, it is 2,094 miles. From Colombo south-east to Fremantle, the nearest port in Australia, it is 3,386 miles, and from Colombo to Singapore the distance is 1,825 miles. East from Capetown, South Africa, to the closest point in Australia, the distance is 4,848 miles, almost twice as far as from New York to San Francisco and 1,400 miles longer than the distance from New York to Liverpool, England.

Looking for a 387-foot ship in such an area was indeed looking for a needle in a haystack, and, as if size and distances were not enough, nature now conspired to confuse the search for the *Emden* by introducing the annual south-west monsoon, constant and torrential.

The storms of September kept fishing boats and small coastal craft in the Bay of Bengal harbours. Merchantmen plied the recognized sea lanes, unwilling to risk short cuts. Sea captains, familiar with the moods of the Bay of Bengal at this time of year, knew that the raider *Emden* would be difficult to find. Even if she remained in the active trade routes, her low silhouette would be difficult to perceive in the long swells, and, if she should be spotted, her great speed could carry her to the

protective cloak of the rain squalls that constantly peppered the seas.

And because they were familiar with the temperament of the Bay of Bengal during the monsoon season, the captains refused to leave the protection of such great harbours as Calcutta, Madras, and Rangoon. Cargo insurance rates climbed alarmingly after the news of the raider's presence in the Bay reached the London brokerage houses. As a result, much of the Allied sea traffic slowly ground to a halt (particularly on the eastern side of the Bay of Bengal), and only the ships of neutral nations dared the sea. A few adventuresome captains would slip away from the great ports under cover of darkness, keeping close to the shoreline for the protective cloak of the land background.

The Calcutta City Council convened to discuss the problem, since marine traffic to and from this great port had come to a standstill. The first move on the agenda was to reward the Venetian captain with a bronze medal for informing authorities that a German cruiser was active in the vicinity. The council then drew up a resolution condemning the lack of naval protection for Indian ports and demanding that Britain send a large fleet of warships to track down and eradicate the enemy.

Von Müller, leading his flock across the stormy bay, was informed of the trouble he was creating by the hourly wireless reports from Calcutta radio.

"We are twisting the Lion's tail. Let's make him roar with pain," he told his crew during one of his daily news reports. He was loudly cheered. But back on the bridge, von Müller knew that he must now be more cautious. They were looking for him, and the British would have much more cruiser strength than they would admit to Calcutta authorities. He was hopeful that the search was being confined to the eastern area of the Bay of Bengal below Rangoon and Calcutta, where all his captures had occurred.

And that indeed was where the search was concentrated, while the *Emden* cruised unseen to within sight of the great temple of Vishnu, which dominated the religious city of Puri, some 250 miles south-west of Calcutta. The great golden dome of the temple was visible fifty miles at sea, a daytime beacon to

the sailor and the devout. Von Müller, who was both, decided this was a good time to free his prisoners.

The *Emden* made a wide circular sweep of the area to ensure that no ships were in sight. Then all prisoners were transferred to the *Kabinga*, an operation that took most of one day and the early morning of the next, as the high monsoon seas made transfers difficult. As an indication of how the prisoners felt toward the Germans, the *Kabinga* captain presented Lieutenant Schmidt with a fine oilskin. His wife threw her arms about him and exclaimed: "You have the most courageous, the most chivalrous captain I have ever heard of . . . just wait until I tell them about it in Calcutta . . . so handsome . . . so dashing."

"We Germans are not so bad," laughed Schmidt, "but we have a war to win."

"Please come to Calcutta soon and catch some of those Hooghly pilots. . . . Those bastards should know something of war, also," said the *Kabinga* skipper on parting. Everyone enjoyed this remark, for the lordly Hooghly river pilots, who steered all merchant ships up the tortuous channels to Calcutta, were the highest paid and the most autocratic pilots on all the Seven Seas. When Schmidt on his return to the *Emden* passed on the suggestion, von Müller chuckled and replied that he might yet capture a Hooghly pilot just to win some respect from the Calcutta authorities.

As the *Kabinga* sailed for Calcutta, the *Emden* turned south just in time to raise a smoke smudge on the horizon. The ship was the English collier *Trabrock*, a new 4,000-ton vessel running empty from the south-east India port of Negapatam for Calcutta to pick up a load of soft coal for Suez. Fooled by the *Emden*'s four funnels, her crew was surprised and shocked when the raider fired across her bows.

Von Müller, via the *Markomannia*, recalled the *Kabinga* by signals, and transferred the *Trabrock*'s 34 officers and crew to her lifeboat; he then blasted the collier with waterline dynamite charges. The sound of the detonations and the pillar of smoke attracted yet another moth to von Müller's candle.

The moth was the *Clan Matheson*, a 4,775-ton transport bound from Liverpool to Calcutta. Her skipper, Captain Walter Harris, was on her bridge this gusty morning of September 15;

he saw the explosion and felt the concussion of the blast from the dying *Trabrock*. He immediately ordered full speed ahead and gripped the rail tightly in anticipation of rescuing the hapless victims of an explosion at sea.

Meanwhile, the ever-alert lookouts on the *Emden* saw the *Clan Matheson*, and von Müller manoeuvred his cruiser aft of the sinking *Trabrock* so that the dense clouds of smoke would hide her presence. Steam was up in her boilers, and her heavy black smoke mingled with the smoke of the *Trabrock* to form a rather effective screen.

Captain Harris sailed into the trap. But he was a tough mariner who had sailed the England-to-India run for many years, and he was as stubborn as they come. When he saw the outline of the cruiser he knew instantly he had been trapped, and he called for more steam, urging his stokers to pour on the coal. He took the wheel himself and began to zig-zag away from the *Emden*.

“Sound the alarm . . . send an SOS,” Harris shouted to his wireless operator. “Quickly man . . . quickly.”

As the operator fingered the keys, the *Emden*’s transmitter began jamming the message. At the same moment, two blanks were fired across the *Clan Matheson* bows.

HALT . . . DO NOT USE THE WIRELESS . . . NO WIRELESS, signalled the *Emden*.

“Pour on the coal,” Captain Harris yelled into the engine-room voice pipe. He spun the wheel back and forth in a vain attempt to out-manoeuvre the enemy.

The shoreline was only eight miles away. “To hell with the Germans, I’ll beach her,” he shouted, and he headed the transport toward the near-distant shore.

Von Müller, tiring of the game, became exasperated. He ordered a single live shell fired at the vessel. The breach clicked shut on the forward gun and a second later a shell screamed toward the ship. It passed through the light steel plates just aft of the forward winch on the port side and exploded.

Captain Harris and his crew were thrown to the decks by the explosion. “Full astern,” he ordered reluctantly, and the *Clan Matheson* was brought to a stop a few minutes later. A prize crew boarded her as the *Emden* pulled alongside. They

found the *Clan Matheson* held a valuable and astonishingly diversified cargo: a number of steam railway locomotives; scores of gasoline engines; a thousand bicycles; several Rolls-Royces for Indian Rajahs, and two prize English thoroughbreds, *en route* to race in the fabulous Calcutta Sweepstakes. The total value of her cargo was £38,000.

According to her ship's orders, she was to return to England with an entire Indian Cavalry Regiment.

"Please don't let those wonderful horses drown," Harris begged the boarding officers.

"My captain does not believe in either cruelty to animals or gambling," replied Leutnant Schmidt. "I will have them shot."

Two sailors dispatched the horses while the explosives crew went below and opened the sea cocks. Four dynamite charges were set in the main engine room. The *Emden*, now circling half a mile away, closed in and picked up the boarding crew while the prisoners were quickly transferred to the *Markomannia*. The ships drew back to await the destruction of the *Clan Matheson*. Her death struggle lasted forty-five minutes before she plunged beneath the surface.

At that moment the wireless room picked up a message from Calcutta, a message that was being repeated every few seconds, advising all shipping in the Bay of Bengal to take extreme precautions as the German raider was still on the loose. Calcutta also announced that the British cruiser, *Minotaur*, had reached Bengal and was now engaged in searching for the *Emden* along the west side of the Bay.

Von Müller reacted quickly to this news. "It would be prudent to disappear from this region for a short while," he told von Mücke. "We can return later."

Accordingly, he ordered Kloepper and Gropius to prepare a new course and, with the *Markomannia* and the *Pontoporus* following, he headed eastward across the Bay of Bengal in the general direction of the Andaman Islands. On September 16 he coaled the *Emden* at sea, taking on 450 tons and thereby emptying the holds of the *Pontoporus*. The crew of the *Clan Matheson* was pressed into the back-breaking work; it took them an entire day.

Then, having no further use for the *Pontoporos*, von Müller detached her with a skeleton German prize crew. His orders were to sail her to the hidden lagoon in Simalur where the *Emden* had coaled on her long trip to Bengal, and attempt to purchase coal from the Dutch under the protection of the neutral Greek flag flying from her masthead.

The *Pontoporos* disappeared over the southern horizon. Von Müller and his men were never to see her again. She became the first victim of the British cruisers now converging from all directions from a score of distant harbours in the Far East.

Meanwhile, wireless activity had intensified. Alert telegraphers on the *Emden* were able to listen to countless uncoded messages from Indian shore stations to warships, and as a result they were able for some time to pinpoint the locations being searched by the cruisers. Every hour, day and night, the transmitters at Calcutta and Rangoon crackled instructions to merchantmen and warships, while von Müller and his men laughed at fate and defied the gathering storm.

The exploits of the *Emden* were now the top news of the day in India, and von Müller agreed that it was strange that he and his men were often praised for their courage and daring, while the British Admiralty was constantly singled out for abuse and criticism. News reports from India to England and to the rest of the world, however, dismissed the *Emden* exploits in one breath, while admitting the stoppage of trade in the next.

For instance, on September 17 the following news dispatch was transmitted to the *Times* of London from the correspondent in Bombay.

Bombay, Sept. 17 (Delayed by Censor) No alarm is felt here at the recent capture of British ships by the German cruiser *Emden*, as she is being pursued by British cruisers. The Germans courteously allowed the *Diplomat* crew to take their belongings with them.

On September 20, Reuter's news service for the Far East sent a dispatch over their world-wide system that only the trade routes out of Penang had been closed due to the whereabouts of the *Emden* being unknown.

A *Times* correspondent on the Western Front sent the following message: "Germans are yielding . . . the war is nearing the end."

The *Times* reporter may have thought the war would soon be over in Europe, but to von Müller on the bridge of the *Emden* it was only the beginning. He worked his cruiser and the *Markomannia* through the south channel of Preparis Island, crossed the mouths of the Irriwaddy River and ran up the Gulf of Martaban toward the sea entrance to the city of Rangoon. He cruised back and forth in these waters hoping to catch an enemy ship running from Rangoon to the many trade routes which fanned out from this city to Calcutta, Penang, Singapore, and Aden.

But not a ship was sighted. The *Emden* had closed the port of Rangoon.

Von Müller was enjoying the game thoroughly. As he said to his officers: "The more daring we are, the more likely we are to succeed. But from now on, we are to be extremely careful in our daytime operations. The English are not above trickery, and before we move against any ship in daylight in the future, we must have positive identification, or we wait until night."

He had almost tired of this Rangoon area when a distant smudge of smoke was sighted off the Burma shore. Von Müller, wondering why a ship would venture out of port in broad daylight, decided according to his plan to wait until night. Then he closed in and fired a shot over her bows, while the blinker light pulsed its chilling message. The small steamer came to a stop. She was the Norwegian packet-freighter, the *Dovre*. Her amiable captain was overjoyed to meet von Müller and his men.

"You are wonderful," he said. "Everyone is talking about you."

The *Dovre* captain was happy to accept the prisoners from the *Clan Matheson* and said he would take them to Rangoon. He informed von Müller that the only warships on the east side of Bengal were the French cruisers *Montcalm* and *Dupleix*, which were using Singapore as their home base but working cautiously as far north as Penang. He had heard that several British cruisers were now looking for the *Emden* off Calcutta.

He wished the *Emden* luck and departed north in good

spirits. His information concerning the disposition of the enemy warships prompted von Müller to abandon the Gulf of Martaban. It also inspired a new scheme. He ordered a new course that would take the *Emden* south to the Landfall Islands and then west across the Bay of Bengal, 1,250 miles toward the city of Madras.

Then he called his officers to the wardroom. With obvious delight, he made the announcement that thunderstruck his men. Even von Mücke, who considered himself as daring as his commander, was shocked. "We are going to attack the city of Madras," said von Müller with a grin.

He waited for the hubbub to diminish. "This will draw every British cruiser in the Far East to the vicinity of Madras while we try other trade routes far away from the area. Are you with me?"

The cheers and shouting were deafening. The officers sped off to tell the good news to the crew. Kloepfer and Gropius went to work on the charts, while the wireless crew listened intently to the Indian broadcasting station at Diamond Point near Rangoon, on which uncensored chatter kept them best informed of the movements of the British cruisers. As von Müller had guessed, none of the enemy were anywhere near Madras. The report by the *Dovre*, which had now reached Rangoon with the *Clan Matheson* prisoners, was to lure all of the British, French, and Russian cruisers to the east side of the Bay of Bengal. Von Müller could not have had better results if he had planned it himself.

"But I'm glad I helped a little," he laughed. "On to Madras!"

The Attack on Madras

It was now September 22, 1914, and the *Emden*, moving closer to the city of Madras, was soon to cut a wider swath of destruction. Elsewhere, the German raider *Karlsruhe* was sinking Allied ships in mid-Atlantic, and was soon to blow up 300 miles off Barbados as a result of an explosion (probably in her own magazines). In the North Sea, the two great battle fleets of Germany and Britain were quiet, only the submarine was becoming more active.

During the evening of this September day, the million inhabitants of the busy city of Madras were taking to the streets, to feel the first refreshing breezes from the eastern Ghat Mountains to the west. Mound Road Boulevard was jammed with the throng of Hindus, Moslems, and Christians. Sacred cattle roamed with the crowds. Recruiting agents barked from the corners. Snake charmers drew knots of curious. Street cars rattled their noisy way, clogged with passengers for the waterfront parks.

Napier Park, thick with trees and scented with cinnamon and incense, echoed to the chatter and laughter of the crowd. People's Park and Chepauk Park were similarly busy, and because they were surrounded by buildings, only the merciful darkness of the night would bring relief from the heat.

On the waterfront the rich merchants of Madras were gathering with their flashing brown-eyed ladies at the fashionable Marina, the most exclusive club in the city. Over gin and

bitters this night, the main subject of conversation was the coming Calcutta Sweepstakes.

At nearby Government House, separated from the waters of the bay by a deep, tree-lined park, chandeliers illuminated the evening dress and uniforms of the British of Madras; officers were discussing recruiting arrangements for their many mounted rifle regiments, and already dates of embarkation were being talked about. Laughter greeted one official, who was convinced the war in Europe would be over long before the Indian regiments would get there to win it.

Further along the busy waterfront the soldiers at the Madras Armoury, the "home" of two regiments of Madras province, were actively recruiting.

Nearby, Fort St. George and the Citadel brooded behind their guns which were pointed seaward. They were unmanned tonight. The heavy shells for the guns were stored in the magazines below the Fort, and the steel-grilled doorway leading to the shell storage chamber was locked. The key was kept in the chief armourer's desk, which was locked. Madras had never needed its coastal defence guns.

The nine-mile waterfront of the great city shone like a diamond necklace from George Town at the north end to St. Thome, the old Portuguese section, at the extreme south.

Mariners and traders marvel at the fact that Madras is a seaport, since it has no natural harbour. That it developed into a port and became a great city is one of the great mysteries of the East. It grew on a plot of land which the Rajah of Chandragiri owned but didn't want, and in 1639, after lengthy negotiations with the British East India Company, he consented to give them the plot so that they could build a trading post and a dock to which their sailing vessels could moor. No one expected it to grow beyond these meagre trade essentials. But trade began to flow to the East India Company, and soon caravan routes from all parts of central and southern India led to the city of Madras which grew and grew to supply the traders with food and lodgings. As the caravans increased, so too did the East India Company warehouses and docks. Madras prospered. It became a seat of trade, government, and education, and as the city expanded so too did the port facilities. Then a great storm

caused widespread damage in the middle of the nineteenth century, and finally, in 1881, the British moved in a corps of engineers and thousands of workmen to build an artificial harbour. Massive concrete breakwaters were created to protect the warehouses and docks along the waterfront. Great concrete and steel docks connected to the mainland by rail-embedded piers rose from the muddy waters, and by the beginning of the twentieth century, Madras was indeed a port that vied with the finest in the East, the object of jealous eyes, even in India itself.

The fine harbour and the great bustling city were guarded by a giant beacon, so strong that it could cast its brilliant light for miles over the sea. Located on the landward side of Madras atop a tower which gave it an altitude of 200 feet above sea level, the giant beacon came alive each night when darkness fell and its 15-second flash would stab the night like an exploding star. Seafarers swore they had seen the Madras Light as far as 100 miles away. It was a great beacon dedicated to the safety of the lonely mariner and a guide to his friendly trading ship.

Tonight it would guide the *Emden*.

The *Emden* had been worked unseen to within twenty miles east of Madras. The stab of the beacon could be seen now that darkness had closed out the last orange and red rays of the setting sun. Von Müller was on the bridge, tense with excitement at the prospect of attacking a great city. "I'll wager the lighthouse will not be blinking tomorrow night," he remarked grimly. "It's apparent our presence on the Bay of Bengal hasn't caused any concern in Madras . . . but we'll see, won't we Guérard?" His aide chuckled and replied: "Ja, mein Kapitän."

By heliograph, the *Emden* signalled the *Markomannia* and ordered her to head south towards Trincomalee, Ceylon, and to keep on this course until the *Emden* could catch up with her in the next two days. The *Markomannia* drew away forthwith and set a course for the tip of Ceylon. Actually the *Emden* could have caught her the next day, but von Müller had further plans for his cruiser if the attack on Madras proved to be a success.

Meanwhile, on shore, the last of the workers shuffled from the giant warehouses of the East India Company, leaving only a lone watchman to guard the treasury of hides, tea, rope, rice, cotton, and timber. Nearby, another watchman wandered

between the great Burma Oil Company's giant oil and gasolene storage tanks, brilliantly painted in red and white stripes – like targets. At the dockside, the steamship *Chupra* was disgorging the last of its passengers and freight, and the crew was already heading into town to taste the delights of the Indian brothels in Black Town. Several bare lights flickered on the *Chupra*, and its officers were preparing to leave the ship for a quiet evening at the Marine Rest, near Mound Road and the Park Boulevard. The war seemed very far away from Madras as the *Emden* inched closer and closer like a ghost ship.

The course of the cruiser remained due west in a line with the northernmost lights of the city. In the conning tower, Gropius had taken over the helm, as he often did when the *Emden* was moving into an area where possible shallows lurked beneath the phosphorescent surface of the bay. Kloepper stood by his side, tracing the course of the *Emden* on the marine chart of the Madras approaches.

It was now precisely 9.45 p.m. The *Emden* had worked to within two miles of the shoreline of Black Town, as the native quarter of George Town was called, and, as could be expected, excitement aboard the *Emden* had reached a high pitch. Each officer and man was at his station. The gunners were alert and ready, not daring to make a sound for fear that even the slightest noise might awaken the curious either on the shore or in small boats that occasionally slipped from the Marina for an evening's sail. At each gun, the gunner's eyes bulged in the semi-darkness as he peered over the sights; the first loader was at attention right behind him; the second loader and the third were in position at the ammunition hoist connected to the magazine below. The breeches were closed, and the shells were ready for their destructive assignments. Officers at the central fire control in the conning tower were ready to press the electric buttons that would hurl the shells into Madras. The rangefinder amidships was constantly turning as the distance to the shore narrowed. Ranging was hardly necessary. The *Emden* was working so close to the city that salvos from her great guns could be fired point blank.

Von Müller gripped the rail tightly, while at his side von Mücke whispered orders to the conning tower and Geerdes

stood by the engine-room telegraph ready to relay orders instantly to the engine room below. Beside him, Witthoeft commanded the torpedo-room telegraph at whose end stood Leutnant von Hohenzollern. Gaede was at the master fire control and was standing by for orders from the bridge.

Had they been creeping up on a warship they all would have been in the conning tower, peering through the slits of the armour plate. But this raid was against a relatively unprotected city, and so von Müller and several other officers stood in the warm night air on the bridge, scarcely daring to whisper as the sounds of traffic and people in Madras came to their ears.

In the high masts of the *Emden*, the lights of Madras reflected from the eager faces of the lookouts and the search-light controllers. They shivered in anticipation.

When the excited crew felt they could reach out and touch the bright city, von Müller ordered a ninety degree change of course to starboard, turning the cruiser south at a distance of 1,000 yards from the breakwater toward the shore. *Emden* continued to move south and slightly inland, closer by the minute to the centre of the shining metropolis and closer to the huge circular tanks of the Burma Oil Company. Lights twinkling in the harbour indicated the presence of small freighters at their moorings. Try as they might, lookouts could see no signs of a warship in the roads. The zero hour now approached, and the guns swung in the direction of the oil tanks.

“Ready?” von Müller barked, his voice no longer a whisper.

“On lights,” he commanded and four giant searchlights swung their blue-white rays on the oil tanks. The rangefinder located the range (almost point-blank) in a second; the guns were levelled, and von Müller gave the command to commence continuous rapid firing. Gaede pressed the firing buttons.

There was a roar of flame as the broadsides barked, and a split second later the thud of shells striking the oil tanks thundered over the waterfront and reverberated from the buildings. The five starboard guns were now pumping their 4.1-inch shells at a rate of eight a minute, and a red glow began to light the sky over the oil “farm.” Then with a thunderous roar, giant tanks blew up, some of them sailing hundreds of

feet into the air. Flames leaped into the sky. The concussion was felt on the *Emden*'s bridge.

Huge tanks, some loaded with gasolene, split open, bathing the night in red and orange colours. "Continue rapid firing," von Müller shouted, and the *Emden*'s guns worked furiously. Shells exploded in the warehouse area behind the tanks. A policeman and several natives were killed in this district. More tanks exploded, hurling flaming oil and gasolene into the jerry-built warehouses. Mushrooms of flame billowed hundreds of feet into the air as the bombardment continued.

All activity in Madras stopped. For one paralysing moment the citizens of this great port thought that the end of the world had come. And they panicked. Screams of the frightened echoed and re-echoed from the white stucco buildings of Mound Road. Paving blocks shook to the sound of running bare feet. Strollers in the parks dropped to their knees in prayer. Others fled toward the hills back of the city. Thousands raced to the railway station, hoping to get as far away from Madras as possible. And still the *Emden* shells poured into the dock area and into the oil-tank farm. The steamship *Chupra* was sinking, her officers trapped in the rubble of her smashed deck cabins. Fires silhouetted the tilt of her masts as she began to settle to port. The heat of the fires could be felt aboard the *Emden*. The red glow of the flames lit the faces of the crew, so that they looked almost like devils in the dancing light.

Now, from Fort St. George, the batteries opened up. The shells fell short of the *Emden*, but their geysers of water alerted von Müller to the unexpected menace. He ordered full broadsides hurled at the fort. The searchlights found the walls. The rangefinder set the range, the guns changed their elevations, and the firing continued. In less than a minute the guns of the fort were silenced.

The Madras radio was now sending out a constant SOS: MADRAS ATTACKED . . . MADRAS ATTACKED . . . NEED HELP . . .

"Let's get out of here; we've done enough damage," von Müller said. He ordered all the lights on the *Emden* turned on. Every porthole shone. All the lights of the bridge and the conning tower came on. Masthead lamps illuminated the masts. The searchlights were swung downward to bathe the guns, fore

and aft, in brilliant blue-white light, and with lights still blazing, the *Emden* turned about and headed due north. Ten miles beyond the north limits of Madras all lights were extinguished, and she turned out to sea at top speed. After covering fifty miles in less than two hours, she turned abruptly south and headed in the direction of Ceylon.

Even at this great distance from Madras the city could be seen afire. Von Mücke wrote in his log: "The flames lighted us for ninety miles on our way."

Meanwhile, the population of the city, still unaware of the cause of the explosions but well aware of the vomiting flames, were trampling each other in the race for safety. Troops were ordered out to quell the running hordes, and the cavalry of the Fort tried to stop the exodus without avail.

When dawn broke the *Emden* was 150 miles south-east of the city, and the smoke pall of the unquenchable fires could be seen plainly in the blue of the north-west sky. Von Müller was so elated by the success of the raid that he decided to attack other ports along his route southward. Meanwhile, the Indian Government met in an emergency session dominated by anger and frustration, and called upon Britain to do her utmost to bring the *Emden* to bay.

The *Times* of London carried this story of the raid:

The elusive *Emden* has turned up again, and distinguished herself on this occasion by throwing a few shells into Madras. She succeeded in setting a couple of oil tanks on fire and damaging a telegraph office but disappeared very speedily, exercising a healthy prudence in view of the probable appearance of British cruisers on the scene. There was no purpose to this raid. The commander of the *Emden* is only creating a scare to keep Indian trade in port. Raids of this character should not create alarm. They can have no possible effect upon the eventual outcome of the war. Yet, the *Emden* may continue to deliver dramatic strokes.

Needling the Admiralty over the situation, the *Times* editorialized: "The courage of this German cruiser deserves much recognition."

Said the London *Daily Chronicle*: "The *Emden*'s company have proved their gallantry . . . so far they have had a momentous cruise."

From Reuter in Madras: "Two Indians and one boy were killed."

Bombay report: "Two watchmen only were killed."

Lloyd's of London's agent at the scene cabled: "Several lives have been lost, but damage infinitesimal."

The *Central News* of Calcutta reported: "Damage to Madras is not more than three lakhs of rupees (\$100,000)."

However, the radio at Colombo, Ceylon, put the record straight two days later, broadcasting that the official estimates of the damage to Madras ran between \$20,000,000 and \$40,000,000. And the population was still streaming from the city for the interior.

Meanwhile, having run south without detection, von Müller stormed into the harbour of Pondicherry, a city of 60,000 in the French district of India. There were no ships in the roads, but the *Emden* succeeded in thoroughly frightening the population. Then, a few miles further south, the cruiser made a daring raid into the port of Cuddalore, found no ships moored in the shallow waters of the harbour, and returned to the sea. Again the populace was badly frightened by this bold daylight appearance, and again the radio transmitters broadcast the news of these daring raids to the world.

Von Müller was in gay spirits. When his wireless room informed him that Calcutta radio was complaining that the mail from Bombay was a week overdue because of the *Emden*, he had his telegraphers signal Calcutta that the *Emden* would be happy to deliver the mail, if only she knew where to pick it up.

The Governor General of India wirelessly asked the King, asking for his intervention with the Admiralty to "get rid of the pest no matter what the cost." Trade had virtually ceased on the Bay of Bengal, and trade was vital to India. In addition, no troop transports had left port — a serious blow to the British war effort.

Von Müller was himself concerned by the fact that shipping had ceased in the Bay of Bengal. He needed ships to sink. So he

decided to lure them from their ports by disappearing for a short time from his usual haunts, and trying another area for his attacks. He sailed the *Emden* well out to sea, continuing ever south, but far enough east to avoid the coastal waters around the north-east section of Ceylon. It was a clever move, as the Japanese cruiser *Chikuma* was on duty in the waters he was avoiding. Deferring for the moment his intended run to the Island of Simalur to buy coal from the Dutch or receive coal from the *Pontoporos*, von Müller decided to investigate the sea trade surrounding Ceylon. He made contact with the *Markomannia*, and on September 25 he began a new series of captures and sinkings unparalleled in naval history.

Shortly after 12.00 noon on this date, with the backdrop of the misty blue-green mountains of Ceylon providing a perfect camouflage, von Müller watched a British freighter steam into his trap. She was the 3,500-ton *King Lud*, bound from Suez to Calcutta with a cargo of Argentine tinned beef.

"This is luck indeed," laughed von Müller. "Let's save the beef and sink the ship."

Lauterbach's boarding party removed the crew to the *Markomannia*, while other sailors transported the heavy cases of beef from the *King Lud* to the *Emden* and the *Markomannia*. Then, off Pointe de Galie, the freighter was sent to the bottom by gunfire. Von Müller had chosen this method because he wanted to watch the gunnery of his men.

"It could be better," he snapped at Lieutenant Gaede. "Spend more time with your men. I want perfection on my guns. We can't afford to let a few victories over unarmed transports make us careless."

Sailing on south, the *Emden* rounded Ceylon's Dondra Head and started up along the west coast, keeping close all the while to the precipitous shoreline, so as to escape detection from the sea. Having paralysed Rangoon and Calcutta, von Müller now informed his officers that he was intending to bottle up the tremendous trade in and out of Colombo, the capital of Ceylon. At ten that night, the lookouts shouted their warning of a ship's light ahead. The sirens sounded shrilly, and von Müller rushed to the bridge. Since the *Emden* was only fifty miles south-west of Colombo and close to busy sea lanes, von Müller decided

to slip alongside the vessel, which was obviously a small freighter. She turned out to be the Norwegian *Oceania* and her crew mistook the *Emden* for a British cruiser. After receiving her greetings von Müller signalled her: "Proceed and have a good voyage."

Later, while edging closer to Colombo's vast harbour, the officers of the watch could see the beams from a score of search-lights sweeping the roads. It was apparent that the attack on Madras had alerted the harbour officials to keeping a close watch on all ships entering the busy port. The *Emden* therefore remained several miles off the entrance, while the officers watched the water activity silhouetted by the brilliantly-lighted city.

The shout of the forward lookout indicated that an outbound vessel had been sighted. Von Müller closed in, and with a megaphone ordered the frightened captain and his mates to bring the ship to a halt. She was the *Tymeric*, of 3,500 tons, *en route* to London, with eight million pounds of sugar.

"My God," exclaimed von Müller. "We will sweeten the Indian Ocean tonight."

"We have already shot their racehorses, drunk their tea and bathed in their soap, and now we steal the sugar," commented von Mücke in his diary. "I'm afraid our popularity with the English is waning."

Lauterbach and his bluejackets boarded the *Tymeric* and steered the ship into the darkness of the ocean, away from the sweeping lights of Colombo. When safely out of the busy pathway to the harbour, the *Tymeric*'s crew was transferred to the *Emden*. The sea cocks were opened in the engine room, and she sank quietly and swiftly with her valuable cargo. Her captain swung at von Müller when the commander introduced himself. For this, his belongings were tossed overboard. The chief engineer struck Lauterbach on the face, and he was put in irons. When the *Tymeric*'s captain became abusive again, he, too, was placed in the brig.

"Stand for no nonsense," von Müller ordered.

He was heading for his cabin after these incidents when the conning tower recalled him. The lights of another vessel had come into view. Von Müller ordered the distance closed at full

speed, and in a few minutes the *Emden* pulled alongside. Von Müller shouted in English, through his megaphone: "Halt your ship; this is the *Emden*."

The vessel shuddered to a stop, her captain and crewmen sleepy, partly clothed, and frightened half to death. She was the English steamship, *Gryfevale*, 4,437 tons, without a cargo and bound for Colombo to pick up food supplies for Suez.

"Let's spare her, and we'll transfer the prisoners to her in the morning," von Müller ordered. On the morning of the 27th the transfer of all the prisoners collected since the *Kabinga* had sailed took place, well out to sea, but not yet beyond the sight of the mountains of Ceylon.

Leaving the *Markomannia* and the *Gryfevale* to cruise forty miles south of the main sea lanes, von Müller took the *Emden* back to the busy routes, and that night made the most important capture of his career. He knew she was a big ship by the number of her lights and the distance between her bow light and her stern lanterns.

Pulling alongside and sending a signal, he succeeded in having the ship pulled to a stop. Lauterbach boarded her and immediately sent back the signal which overjoyed von Müller and his men:

ENGLISH COLLIER BURESK . . . CARDIFF TO HONG KONG . . .
6,000 TONS OF WELSH HARD COAL FOR EAST ASIATIC SQUADRON . . .
SPEED IS 18 KNOTS.

"I can't believe we could have such great fortune," said von Müller. "Why, she carries 1,600 more tons than my *Markomannia*, and she's the fastest collier I have ever known. She must be the fastest on the seas."

"Von Mücke?"

"Yes, Kapitän."

"From now on, this *Buresk* will be our collier. We can cruise longer and faster than ever before. The British will rue this day."

Leutnant Kloepper was given command of the collier, and her Chinese crew elected to stay with her. Her captain and her English engineers were made prisoners on the *Gryfevale*. Then the *Emden* worked her way slowly westward with the *Buresk*, *Markomannia*, and *Gryfevale* following in her wake.

She overtook the English steamer *Ribera* of 3,500 tons, and sent her, with her cargo of guns and ammunition, to the bottom. From her log, von Müller learned that she had recently passed a British convoy of 67 ships bound for Aden from Bombay and guarded by only two cruisers, the *Swiftsure* and the Russian *Askold*. He thought it unbelievable that the English would guard so many ships with only two cruisers, and he hoped he would meet the next convoy at night, if the odds were like that.

Then, on the night of September 27, the *Emden* pounced on the 4,000-ton English freighter *Foyle*, and sank her with her load of munitions. Another ship close behind her was spared. She was the Batavia Line steamer *Djocja*, a Dutch neutral, and because she might tell Colombo of the *Emden*'s presence, it was decided to abandon this area for the moment. All prisoners were quickly transferred to the *Gryfevale* and sent toward Colombo at noontime of September 28. The crews of the sunken ships cheered the *Emden* as she left their company. Von Müller, up to his old tricks, changed course when out of sight, and headed due south into the utter loneliness of the Indian Ocean.

When the Admiralty heard of the depredations of the *Emden* off Colombo, so dangerously close to their troop convoys from Western India, an unprecedented 72 warships were ordered into the Indian Ocean to hunt down the elusive raider.

The odds were beginning to narrow.

TO

H.M.S. Yarmouth Strikes

Winston Churchill now had to face his critics. Much had been happening. Von Spee had attacked Papeete in Tahiti in broad daylight and had sunk a French gunboat in the harbour. The *Emden* had seriously interfered with Britain's supply of strategic tin and rubber, as well as sending the prices up. Commerce insurance, normally 2 per cent, had risen to an unprecedented 8 per cent for Indian Ocean cargoes. Cargo losses caused by the *Emden* thus far totalled £1,082,000 and this did not take into account the loss of valuable and much-needed merchant ships.

The cruiser *Dresden* had disappeared from the Atlantic and was believed on her way to join von Spee. The commerce raider, *Karlsruhe*, was unreported in the South Atlantic and, unknown to the British, she was sinking a fantastic number of ships, keeping their crews as prisoners, so that no word of her activities would leak out.

The *Königsberg* was free to roam the Indian Ocean and could effect a junction with the *Emden*, creating a dangerous naval situation.

"It is fair criticism that we ought to have more cruisers on our foreign stations," Churchill admitted. He outlined to the House of Commons in London the tremendous strain on his naval forces and ended his explanation by saying that the elimination of "these pests" was only a matter of time.

His reference to the raider *Emden* as a "pest" found little support in England. The daily adventures of the little cruiser were making headline news, and von Müller had emerged as the

first full-blown war-time hero at a time when a hero was necessary, be he friend or foe. Not a single day went by that the *Emden* and her commander were not mentioned in the news dispatches of the world. It was exciting reading in London, Edinburgh, Berlin, Paris, Hong Kong, Sydney, and New York.

Von Müller was unaware of the tremendous interest that his raids had created at home and elsewhere. He was concerned only with waging unrelenting war on Allied commerce and, at the same time, trying not to endanger the lives of his men or of non-combatants. He spent the last days of September in the Maldivian Islands, a collection of 13 large atolls and 2,000 smaller islands lying some 400 miles south-west of Ceylon. Since only 300 of the islands were populated, von Müller found it easy to find an uninhabited atoll to coal from the *Markomannia* and to enjoy a much-needed respite from his strenuous activities.

The Maldives, scattered over 115 square miles of ocean, were once the haven of vicious pirates and eighteenth-century commerce raiders. Von Müller knew this, and wrote: "It was a fitting place for us to hide while our enemies hunted for us." When Lauterbach suggested they were little more than pirates and should be wearing a patch over one eye, von Müller replied: "Let's all try guessing who would be the first to walk the plank."

The faithful *Markomannia* was emptied of her coal and sent to join the *Pontoporos* at Simalur, 1,700 miles away. Her orders were to empty the *Pontoporos* of her coal, if she had managed to buy any, and then to travel to Padang, Sumatra, to purchase further supplies of tinned food, flour, and dry milk.

It was the *Markomannia*'s last assignment. As she faded over the horizon, von Müller took the *Emden* south. With the newly-acquired *Buresk*, he ran for five days to the Chagos Archipelago, 1,100 miles south-west of Ceylon. Then, for three days, he zig-zagged back and forth in these lonely waters, because he had been informed by the skipper of the *Ribera* that the Australians would soon be sending a convoy of troops to Europe and that it would pass close to the Chagos Islands. But finding the seas empty of shipping, the *Emden* anchored in the shelter of Nelson's Island, while the engines were alternately stopped and cleaned, condensers repaired, boiler tubes replaced, lifeboat lines renewed, and side rails strengthened.

Hempen ropes were woven into squares and strung between the funnels to trap wooden splinters, in case of a possible naval engagement when enemy shells could shatter lifeboats or other wooden articles.

While the crew alternately worked and rested and the sun bronzed their muscular bodies, von Müller and his officers worked out the details of future raids. He had decided on yet another daring plan: to attack the busy harbour of George Town, on the British island of Penang off the Malay Peninsula. It was a bold and dangerous plan, but surprise and daring had paid rich dividends so far, and the risk was worth the effort. His contempt for the French warships sheltered at Penang spurred his determination.

On the morning of October 9, the *Emden* entered the palm-bordered harbour of Diego Garcia, at the lower end of the Chagos Islands. While coaling operations were under way, von Müller entertained the French mayor of the village, who thought the *Emden* was on a goodwill tour, not knowing in this forgotten place that war was raging around the world. The mail-boat from Mauritius, supposed to make four calls a year, hadn't turned up since July. Armageddon was a long way from the lonely Chagos.

It was von Müller's intention to cruise for several days in an attempt to locate the Australian convoy or discover a lone ship with fresh mutton heading for the war theatre, but his wireless operators changed his mind. Their alertness even postponed his projected raid on George Town in Penang. They had intercepted a British wireless message from some unidentified station in India answering an enquiring merchantman. The message assured the enquirer that the Colombo-Aden shipping lane was safe once again since the *Emden* had disappeared from the entire area.

"Back to the happy hunting grounds," laughed von Müller. "Back, back, back."

The *Emden* raced northward toward the Maldives once again, spending October 11, 12, and 13 at sea. They sighted the islands on October 14 and coaled from the *Buresk* the next day at Miladumadulu atoll. And all the while the luck of the *Emden* continued. As she was proceeding up the west side of the

Maldives, her favourite and persistent "bloodhound," *Hampshire*, was searching for her on the eastern side. But von Müller was unaware of this, and he continued rapidly toward the island of Minicoy, astride the Colombo-Aden sea lanes.

But if *Hampshire* was experiencing her usual frustration at this moment, the cruiser *Yarmouth* was having luck 1,800 miles to the east. She overhauled the *Pontoporos* and the *Markomannia* at Simalur and sent the former under a prize crew to Singapore because she was Greek-owned. Then she sank the *Markomannia*, heedless of the fact that Britain had lost many merchant ships in the Bay of Bengal, and certainly could have used this valuable liner. The British credited the Dutch for these dual captures; the two German ships had been reported to them at Singapore as soon as they reached Simalur.

A German reservist aboard the *Pontoporos* kept a diary of events, and they are interesting to record. Although his name is not mentioned, his diary was seized when he was jailed in Singapore as a prisoner-of-war, and his observations were incorporated into the text of the "Convoys and the *Emden*," a part of the Australian Government's official history:

23/9 . . . About 2.00 p.m. we saw a warship on the horizon which made for us; as it came nearer, we saw that she was the Dutch warship *Seven Provinces*, a protected cruiser. She passed us and went inshore to anchor.

24/9 . . . About 2.00 p.m. we saw another warship; this was Dutch protected cruiser *Tromp* with a destroyer. At 4.30 p.m. these ships approached the *Pontoporos* to find out what our real intentions were. We ran up the Greek flag but saw that we were being watched through glasses.

25/9 . . . We puttered up and down the coast, watched carefully by the Dutch warships, for they would have very much liked to know what our real intentions were.

(Soon after this the Dutch seemed to have grown tired, for no further mention is made of them in the reservist's diary.) Nothing of consequence happened until October 6 when complaints about the food, which until then had been the

most significant entries, were replaced in importance by the arrival of the *Markomannia*, and the transfer of coal from *Pontoporos* began. It was slow progress; the Greek vessel's crew struck, and had to be kept at work at pistol point. The coaling was expected to be completed by the thirteenth, but there was an interruption and the diary continued:

12/10 . . . Earlier in the night, it happened that the sky was for a long time lit up with searchlights. At 5.30 a.m. we started coaling again. About six, I saw from the deck a cloud of smoke on the horizon. Anticipating no good, I reported it to the bridge, where the captain was. The answer "Oh, let it be man . . . when it gets nearer we shall find it's a Dutchman." "Right-o," said I to myself, "if you're in that sort of a temper . . ." and I went back to my work.

But it struck me that the ship was coming along frightfully fast, and then I saw by the type of it that it must be an English or a Japanese ship. I dropped my work and woke my leutnant who was still asleep. By the time he came on deck, everyone could see that she was an enemy ship. Now came the order to cast off. We stopped coaling and got our side-arms. Casting off was done at last, but there were so many hindrances, for one of the stern lines got entangled in the screw, so that for five minutes we couldn't move. We were trying to get into neutral waters before the warship could reach us.

The *Markomannia* was well ahead of us when suddenly the warship made the signal: "Stop at once or I fire." Shortly afterwards a shot was fired . . . then two more; that made the *Markomannia* stop. At that, we in the *Pontoporos* had to stop too. The *Yarmouth*, an English cruiser, laid herself between the two vessels and gave the *Markomannia*'s crew ten minutes to abandon ship and transport themselves in their own boats aboard the *Yarmouth*. We *Emdenites* tried to get a boat clear of the *Pontoporos*, but soon saw that any attempt to escape to land was useless, so we yielded to our fate. Soon we saw a boat coming to us, to take aboard the *Emdenites* also; then we

threw overboard our arms and all the ammunition so the English would not get them. When everybody was aboard the *Yarmouth*, she approached *Markomannia* and sank her by gunfire.

Meanwhile, the *Emden* was still on the west side of the Maldives. On the night of October 15 she raised Minicoy light, and the lights of a ship a short while later. For some inexplicable reason von Müller was uneasy about this vessel, and he circled around her several times in the darkness before pouncing like a cat upon an unsuspecting mouse. His fears proved to be groundless. She was English, the 3,498-ton *Clan Grant*, her valuable cargo including cattle, canned goods, flour, potatoes, soap, tobacco, and beer. At dawn, a few of these supplies were hauled to the *Emden*, but the transfer was interrupted by the appearance of another smoke cloud. This time, however, the laugh was on von Müller. The smoke enveloped the lowly dredge *Ponrabbel*, *en route* from England to Tasmania.

The captain and the crew of the dredge fell to their knees and gave thanks for their deliverance as the German prize crew boarded her. Their trip had been a nightmare in turbulent seas, and there was not a single member of the crew who was not violently ill from bad food. Sores infested their wasted bodies. A similar dredge, which had preceded them, had sunk with all hands two weeks before in one of the violent gales common in the Arabian Sea at this time of year. As a result, all the crew of the *Ponrabbel* had despaired of ever reaching Tasmania. No wonder they were grateful to the Germans for their "rescue" and cheered as the dredge was sunk by shellfire.

The *Emden* returned her attention to the *Clan Grant* and sent her to the bottom of the Laccadive Sea, with most of her cargo. Then, heading eastward she sighted another victim, this time the British *Ben Mohr* of 4,806 tons, bound from Liverpool to Tokyo with a cargo of locomotives and engine parts. Her crew joined the other prisoners aboard the *Buresk*.

No captures were made on October 17, and since the only vessels so far in this area had been inbound to Colombo, von Müller suspected the British were forming a convoy for the outbound vessels. He decided this would create an interesting

challenge. Working eastward from Minicoy, he let the Spanish mail packet, *Fernando Po*, *en route* from Manila to Barcelona, pass unmolested without revealing his identity.

Then, on Sunday, October 18, immediately following the morning service (conducted in German for his crew, and in English for the prisoners) the *Emden* located and ran down one of the richest prizes of her illustrious career. This was the *Troilus*, owned by the English Blue-Funnel Line, loaded with 10,000 tons of copper, tin, rubber, and general cargo and 900 tons of soft coal, and bound from Colombo to London, via the Suez.

Her captain was furious, not at the Germans, but at the British who had assured him at Colombo that the *Emden* was far away from the area, probably near where her supply ships *Pontoporos* and *Markomannia* had recently been seized. The British had already concentrated their warships in the Sumatra area, leaving the seas around Ceylon and India free to the very pirate they were hunting.

"I was told by the port superintendent at Colombo to steer thirty miles north of Minicoy and I would be absolutely safe," wailed her captain. "God, how many more will be sunk before they find out this appalling mistake?"

"Since this area had been recommended by the British Navy, maybe we should stay here," laughed von Müller. And he didn't have long to wait.

At 9 p.m., two hours after the *Troilus* had been secured, 5,596-ton *St. Egbert*, loaded with sugar and freight for New York City, cruised serenely into the trap. But she was spared by von Müller because she carried goods for the United States.

Three hours later the *Emden* raced to a series of flickering lights and ran alongside another valuable prize. She was the British collier, *Exford*, with more than 5,000 tons of hard Welsh coal for Singapore. This supply would last the *Emden* many weeks. This, indeed, was a day to remember, and von Müller shared his joy with the crew by increasing their allotment of beer for the week.

With the *Troilus*, *Exford*, *St. Egbert*, and *Buresk* following, the *Emden* worked back and forth in these rich waters. But now von Müller was becoming concerned regarding the number of

his officers and sailors serving as prize crews on the captured ships. (Six officers and sixty-two men.) He determined to consolidate his forces at the first opportunity. He would need every man he could muster in the event the *Emden* was brought to action. Therefore, at dawn on October 19, all the prisoners were transferred to the *St. Egbert*, while the supplies of the *Troilus* were loaded aboard the *Buresk*. The *Emden* cruised around her brood a short distance off, keeping her steam up and her "eyes" watchful.

The appearance of yet another smoke cloud drew the *Emden* to it. She was the brand-new liner *Chilkana*, 5,220 tons, operated by the British India Navigation Company on her maiden voyage from London to Madras and Calcutta.

Her crew and passengers were transferred to the *St. Egbert*, and her medical stores and latest wireless equipment were brought to the *Emden*. Then, with her captain and officers weeping unashamedly, she was blasted to the bottom along with the captured *Troilus*. Sharks which had been killed by the explosions in the vessels were attacked by hundreds of other giant sharks, and soon the entire sea in the area was alive with twisting giants and bloody froth. The prisoners expressed profound gratitude to the Germans for taking them prisoners and not sending them down with their ships. All they had heard since the beginning of the war were the stories of brutal German atrocities. The courtesy and consideration shown by von Müller and his crew filled them with respect and admiration. They were to spread the story of this gallant crew as soon as they reached port. The *Emden* fan club was reaching impressive proportions.

Von Müller finally decided to dismiss the *St. Egbert*, now loaded to overflowing with prisoners. He had her captain brought to him in the charthouse which had been especially prepared for the meeting.

If von Müller's next plan of action was to work successfully, it was necessary to get the captain of the *St. Egbert* to race to the nearest port to spread the alarm. That port was Cochin, on the west coast of India. But to hoodwink the captain, von Müller said to him: "I would suggest that you go to Cochin because I do not want you in the vicinity of Bombay. I don't

want to have to capture you again. Please say nothing about this to anyone."

The captain promised. Von Müller turned his back on him for as long as five minutes, giving him plenty of time to see the carefully pencilled charts before him on the table. They all showed newly-made markings on the waters around Bombay and on the sea lanes converging on this great port.

As von Müller had planned, the captain steamed to Cochin and immediately informed the British authorities that the *Emden* was running to Bombay and that he had secretly spied on the plans, while the "stupid" von Müller had turned his back. The Admiralty was informed and immediately ordered all available cruisers to the area, leaving the French on the east side of the Bay of Bengal to guard the route to Singapore.

This was exactly what von Müller wanted. He changed the *Emden*'s course abruptly away from the direction of Bombay, and then south around Ceylon and eastward across the Indian Ocean. He detached the *Exford* with orders to meet him at the Cocos Islands on November 15.

On October 25 he coaled his ship off Great Nicobar Island, north-west of Sumatra Head, and then detached the *Buresk* to meet him off Simalur in five days. He wanted no incumbrances on his next mission.

Then hoisting the British flag to the masthead, he headed for the island of Penang and its port and harbour of George Town. His plan was to bombard the harbour installations and sink the merchant ships anchored in the roads. He was unaware that a Russian cruiser, as well as the French warships, were at Penang at this moment.

II

The Attack on Penang

Penang, the British island lying a scant two miles west of the mid-section of the Malay Peninsula, contained in 1914 one of the finest and busiest harbours in the Far East. In later years its importance was replaced by Singapore, lying 488 miles southward. The port was officially named George Town, but sailors always referred to it as Penang, either in ignorance of its real name, or just because they were tired of a name that had been bestowed on so many ports around the world.

Always hot, always humid, Penang was named after the betel-nut palm. George Town was its strategic shipping outlet for tin, rubber, iron ore, coal, palm oil, rice, tea, pineapples and coconuts, products that came to the port from every part of the Straits Settlements for world-wide distribution. The island was shaped like a saucer, its soggy interior dedicated to rice cultivation. The only predominant height of land was a towering hill overlooking the port, atop of which was a powerful wireless transmitting station which could be heard all through the East.

A one-time penal colony, George Town was the clearing house for opium and white-slavery, and was known throughout the East as a cesspool of crime and prostitution. On the night of October 27, 1914, it was its typical self. French and Russian sailors mixed with Indians, Chinese, and Malays in the bars and in the brothels. Doe-eyed Malaysian beauties beckoned from the doorways of the opium dens. The city was bright and gay, its noises embellished by the sounds of the busy harbour where

a score of merchantmen were moored in the roads, secure in the presence of the Russian cruiser *Zemchug* and several French destroyers. Between these big ships were hundreds of sampans, junks and lighters, the water homes of the island traders.

Overlooking the teeming harbour were the guns of Fort Cornwallis. Tonight they were manned by a skeleton crew. The war was a long way from Penang, and the only precaution deemed necessary was the stationing of a French warship at the channel entrance leading to George Town's harbour. Everything else was routine.

It was a situation made to order for a daring commander like von Müller. At this moment the *Emden* lay 150 miles to the north-west. And in her crowded wardroom, von Müller was outlining to his officers the programme of his intended visit to Penang.

Turning to a large chart of the eastern side of the Bay of Bengal, von Müller used a pointed stick to trace the path that the *Emden* would follow to the island of Penang and the escape route from the island which would be made under forced draught toward the Spice Islands. There it would be possible to lie undetected for a day or so, at least long enough to coal. He answered several questions, and then affixed a second chart on the wardroom wall. This was a detailed map of the harbour of George Town, the channel between the island and the mainland, the docks and moorings, Fort Cornwallis (whose guns he thought might be loaded), and the various headlands necessary to navigating into the inner harbour. Von Müller spent some twenty minutes describing the channel alone, because it was always jammed with shipping. Only a narrow, tortuous pathway, not more than a quarter of a mile wide, was open to sea traffic. He fully intended to take the *Emden* into this channel, into the inner harbour, turn around, and then make his escape, knowing that his unexpected visit would undoubtedly cause great confusion and even panic.

He showed that after travelling the entire length of the channel from north to south, the *Emden* would have to make a sharp ninety-degree turn to starboard to enter the main harbour between the protruding heads of land. Inside this snug harbour, the city lay to the right behind the warehouses and docks.

He pointed out that it would be necessary to travel a considerable distance into the inner harbour in order to negotiate the turn. When this was accomplished, the shelling of the warehouses and merchantmen in the harbour would commence, while the *Emden* ran the gauntlet to the sea. If the guns of Fort Cornwallis should open fire upon the *Emden*, they should be immediately silenced by the after guns. The forward and portside batteries would be shelling the facilities and ships to port, while the starboard guns would be trained at any merchantmen moored in the roads to the south of the city, and to the south of the escape channel. Torpedo tubes would be aimed at any warships moored in the roads, and would be fired first to effect a complete surprise.

The logistics plan now revealed by von Müller disclosed that the *Emden* was due off the north-west tip of Penang Island at a distance of six miles off the land at 4.00 a.m. sharp. The speed of the cruiser would be reduced to ten knots (later eight knots), and if the harbour pilot should unfortunately show up to question this unannounced ship, he was to be taken aboard to assist them. If he hesitated, he was to be threatened with being taken prisoner and thrown overboard. Von Müller said that a channel marker was located about 1,500 yards due north of the channel entrance and speed would be further decreased at this point. The inner harbour at George Town should be entered sharp at 5.00 a.m. (in order to escape the light of the waning moon, which should be behind Penang Hill). Then the ship would creep ahead and turn in semi-darkness, with the first light of dawn now showing to help distinguish ships and the outbound channel.

No hats would be worn, von Müller told his officers. No persons were to show their faces, and if the *Emden* should be challenged, von Müller would answer the challenge in English through his megaphone, "Yarmouth coming to port." With the fourth funnel in place and the White Ensign flying, he thought it would be relatively simple to effect the ruse. Then, when ready, each gun would be fired under the direct orders of an officer and not from central fire control, since all shelling would be rapid fire at shifting targets on all sides. Every ship for this occasion was deemed to be an enemy, with the exception of

native craft, which von Müller intended to avoid scrupulously.

He finished his discussions at 2.00 a.m. with the reminder that it would not go well for his navigators or his helmsmen if they should put him on a sandbar this night. He ordered all officers and men to stay alert, and the cooks were instructed to feed everyone bowls of hot milk and soup to help keep them on their toes. He made an inspection of the guns, the torpedo flat, and the ship's first-aid quarters before retiring briefly to his cabin to read the Bible.

The wind was from the south at eight knots, causing very little drift in the *Emden*'s eastward course. From time to time the full moon would be obscured by racing white clouds, darkening the *Emden* to a fleeting shadow, since she was running without lights of any kind. The temperature was 82 degrees.

Shortly after 3.00 a.m. and not more than 22 miles from target, von Müller returned to the bridge and remained topside despite a night squall that peppered the ship with a short sharp deluge. The moon reappeared as the rain moved northward, and in the distance, easily seen without the aid of binoculars, the light atop Penang Hill pulsed the silent message that beneath its arc rested a haven for Allied ships. Speed of the racing *Emden* was reduced slightly, as she was running ahead of schedule. To the south could be seen the lights of a ship inbound to Penang, but not likely to reach the harbour until sometime after the *Emden*'s projected anti-goodwill visit. But von Müller reminded his officers that her presence should be remembered, because she could be encountered on the way out. She was travelling at low speed, perhaps eight knots, and was evidently a medium-sized freighter. After another half-hour a small steam pinnace passed three miles south-east of the *Emden*, and it was presumed that this was the Penang pilot outbound to meet the lighted vessel. So far, so good.

There was scarcely a sound aboard the cruiser. The thrumming of the engines seemed louder than usual, the vibration adding to the general nervousness and excitement that gripped every man. Lights appeared everywhere now in the near distance, marking channel buoys and moored ships, and their reflections danced on the light chop of the black waters. Eyes strained in the darkness in an attempt to locate any large vessel

and the possibility of gun turrets outlined in the waning moonlight. It was a beautiful tropical night.

The *Emden* now arrived off the channel entrance light, whose blinking indicated that the British did not expect the war to reach Penang this lovely night, or any night. She turned hard starboard as Gropius took the helm and Kloepper called the course with only a subdued binnacle light illuminating the charts. The *Emden* purred contentedly at eight knots, and the channel appeared clearly visible now straight ahead to the south. The Malay shore was to the left and the Penang Island shoreline to the right. As suspected, the channel was littered with small boats, mostly sampans, moored in reasonably orderly lines, leaving the main channel clear but only 100 yards in width at its widest point. The moon cast a hazy glow on the water, providing enough light to silhouette the dim shapes of vessels and giving the muddy waters a milk-like appearance. The night was quiet; only the slap of a small bow-wave of the *Emden* hissed a warning in the night air.

Suddenly from the voice pipe to the forward lookouts came the whisper, "Warship two points to port." Those on the bridge and in the conning tower tensed. The ship in question appeared to be a small cruiser or destroyer, moored in the channel, probably on guard duty. She was the French destroyer *Mousquet* whose lookouts were watching the *Emden* move briskly southward. As the two ships pulled together only 25 yards apart, the *Mousquet* challenged the enemy, and von Müller replied in English through his megaphone: "Yarmouth . . . coming to port." The *Emden* was allowed to pass without further challenge.

It was now 4.30 a.m. and the *Emden* was right on schedule. The first hurdle was safely over, and now it was time to make the turn to starboard into George Town harbour, under the guns of Fort Cornwallis. The moon was sinking below Penang Hill, and the guns of the fort were not visible. The harbour was filled with ships of every size and description, well-illuminated by the lights of the George Town waterfront. The noise of the city reached out and embraced the *Emden* with gay shouts and shrill laughter. With it came the stench of heat, and all the odours of a waterfront where hundreds of families lived on the

surface of the water in hulks (often generously referred to as "sailing vessels").

The *Emden* passed uneventfully between the red and green lights of the harbour narrows and was now in a wider channel heading for the warehouses at the western extremity of the harbour.

The forward lookouts reported another warship ten points to port. She was a big one facing the entrance, all guns forward. A number of crewmen walked her decks. There came a challenge heliographed in International Code: WHO ARE YOU? and the reply: YARMOUTH COMING TO ANCHOR.

There was no further challenge, and now the *Emden* was abreast of her. She was the Russian cruiser *Zemchug*, and von Müller was ready for her. He ordered number one torpedo fired. There was a hiss and a sudden phosphorescent wake, as the silver fish leaped from the torpedo flat in the stern and headed for the centre of the unsuspecting *Zemchug*. There was a violent explosion as the torpedo struck, and at that second the *Emden* opened up with all guns.

For one breathless second all activity in George Town ceased. Then panic gripped the harbour and the city. The flashes of the *Emden*'s guns stabbed the night, masking the first traces of dawn in the north-east. Warehouses behind the docks mushroomed into brilliant red and white flame, as the guns slammed shell after shell into the area. The bombardment was ear-splitting. The people on the island thought the world had come to an end. Those who were not paralysed by fright took to the jungle. Huge embers from the rubble of warehouses followed them.

Now the *Emden* turned her guns on a cluster of ships moored in the roads, as Gropius worked her to port in order to hurl full broadsides at the waterfront and into the moored ships. Several large vessels showed activity; when flashes of fire spewed from their silhouettes, von Müller knew they were warships, and ordered the full might of his guns turned on them. Nearest in the cluster was the small French destroyer *D'Iberville*, a ship of not more than 925 tons. She was 262 feet long and carried a normal complement of 140 men, who were now stumbling in the half-light, confused by the noise of the continuous

bombardment and the screaming explosions of shells. She was no match for the *Emden* as she carried only one 4-inch gun mounted at the bow, three 9-pounders and three 6-pounders along her sides. Next to her was the French destroyer *Kersaint*, of 1897 vintage, with one powerful 6-inch gun and five 4-inch guns. The crews were firing erratically. They weren't even sure what they were firing at. Two other French destroyers, the *Pistolet* and the *Fronde* were working their 6- and 9-pounders, but their shells were falling short, many of them landing among the sampans and house boats which were rowing amid the utter confusion.

There was no confusion aboard the *Emden*. She quickly and efficiently managed to temporarily silence the French warships. Now she was turned so that she faced the entrance to the channel, and she began to move under Gropius's careful control toward the red and green lights in the middle distance. She was getting closer once again to the *Zemchug*, now on her starboard quarter. The Russian forward and stern guns opened up, but the shells passed harmlessly overhead in the confusion, most of them landing into the warehouse area. The *Emden* loosed a second torpedo which further ruptured *Zemchug*'s hull, flooding her engine room, and knocking out her generators. Fires were mounting rapidly, and she was beginning to list to port.

The *Zemchug* was equal to the *Emden* in size and armament, but Russian gun crews were no match for the German. The *Zemchug*, built in 1903, displaced 3,050 tons and was 345 feet in length and 49 feet wide. She had a draught of 16 feet which made her able to negotiate shallow harbours. She mounted six 4.7-inch guns, fore and aft, six 3-pounders, two 1-pounders and a large number of 45-calibre machine guns, which were now firing spasmodically. She had four torpedo tubes along the sides and a single tube at the stern. But her crew of 334 men never got the chance to use them. She was afire and sinking, and the crew was attempting to escape rather than battle a ghost ship they could hardly see.

The *Emden* now turned full port broadsides on Fort Cornwallis, whose guns had belatedly opened up. But the gunners at the Fort were not even sure what they were firing at, let alone

having the range and direction. The cannonading was deafening. It could be heard for miles around, and it alerted the sleeping *Mousquet* at the channel entrance.

A Japanese passenger liner, moored at the city's main dock, burst into flames, and it never was established whose shells had found their mark in her vitals, or whether the terrific heat of the warehouse fires had caused her to erupt into a mass of fire. Von Müller moved from side to side on the bridge with the agility of a cat. His crew was enjoying the excitement of the one-sided battle, pouring shell after shell into the breaches, slamming them shut and then holding their ears against the ear-splitting roars that followed.

At 5.15 a.m. several shells from the *Zemchug* made geysers in the water just ahead of the *Emden*, and von Müller ordered two more torpedoes into the Russian, now 750 yards astern and slightly to starboard. They struck the ship with an earth-shaking blast, and the explosion was instantly followed by an eruption of flame and steel and a concussion which knocked down almost every man on the *Emden*. Some of them were knocked unconscious; others were stunned by the blast. Where the *Zemchug* had been seconds before there was now only a mass of twisted wreckage on the water. The torpedoes had reached her magazine, and she simply blew to pieces, taking a score or more small craft to the bottom with her. Pools of burning oil dotted the surface of the harbour as the smoke of a thousand fires reached up to greet the dawn. Scores of bodies bubbled to the surface as the sinking wreckage released them under pressure of the depth. Another vessel was now in flames, but in the confusion of the smoke and the continuous rapid firing it was impossible to ascertain which one she was. Von Müller was on his feet again, after having been knocked to the steel deck of the bridge by the force of the explosion. He ordered the speed increased, and as he did so, he perceived a merchantman coming to anchor ahead, her chains rattling as the heavy anchor splashed into the turbid surface.

Von Müller was at his best when he was making rapid decisions. He decided to board the ship, seize her log, and then sink her. He considered that the panic and confusion behind him was sufficient to ward off any interference. Therefore, he reduced

the *Emden*'s speed and pulled alongside, the guns aimed point-blank at the British ship's bridge. A boarding party clambered aboard and discovered she was the British steamer *Glenturret*, but the party had only time to seize her log when the siren wailed for their return. Penang radio was broadcasting a steady message to the East: EMDEN AT PENANG . . . SOS . . . EMDEN AT PENANG . . . SOS . . . SOS . . . EMDEN AT PENANG . . . Moreover, the ever-watchful forward lookouts had spotted a warship low in the water and racing toward them. Black smoke poured from her stacks, indicating she was building up steam.

She was the *Mousquet*, which von Müller had fooled when the *Emden* first entered the channel. Now, alerted by the cannonading, she was racing to investigate. The *Mousquet* was a destroyer built in 1902 with two purposes in mind: high speed, and a shallow 10-foot draught to negotiate shallow rivers and harbours in the French Indochina region. She displaced only 303 tons (like a glorified gunboat), and she hugged the waterline with her two funnels hardly higher than her foredeck. Today her complement was 62 officers and men. She now was close enough to fire her 9-pounder on the foredeck. Her two torpedo tubes located on the aft deck swung ready for action. Unfortunately for her, she never got the chance to use them.

The *Emden* was worked several points to starboard to bring a full port broadside into action. The guns erupted, but because of the *Mousquet*'s very low silhouette the shells overshot. Von Müller snapped his jaw shut, an indication of intense displeasure. The next broadside fell short, and von Müller swore loud enough to be heard in the conning tower below. At this moment the *Mousquet* made the error of turning sideways to bring her two starboard 6-pounders into action, but the next salvo of the *Emden* caught her dead centre, and reduced her top structure to twisted rubble. The next salvo tore her guns loose and churned her side plates into scrap metal. Her twin funnels were blown over the side. Then, with an ear-splitting shriek of twisting metal and exploding shells, she blew up.

Despite the fact that Penang radio was still broadcasting the *Emden*'s raid to the entire East, von Müller brought the *Emden* to where the *Mousquet* had been sunk. His men slid down nets and helped several badly wounded French seamen from

the water. Speaking to the survivors in French, von Müller asked them to have courage. They were immediately rushed to the sick bay and the operating tables. One officer and 36 seamen were rescued. After searching the water for another minute, von Müller decided that he had been in Penang long enough, and gave the order that made everyone sigh with relief. It was full-speed ahead. Astern, rounding the entrance to the harbour, the lookouts could see the destroyer *Fronde* gathering speed, but the *Emden*'s great power carried her quickly northward and out of the channel. She swung west, and after an hour's run, during which time the *Fronde* was visible, hull down, at a considerable distance, the *Emden* turned to meet an approaching storm.

The helmsman swung the wheel slightly to take her into the teeth of the gale, and she ran through the wind and mounting waves for two hours at almost top speed. When she broke through the scud clouds, the *Fronde* was nowhere in sight. Then the *Emden* turned south on a course toward Sumatra Head.

If the crew expected a rest after the Penang episode, they were doomed to disappointment. Von Müller remembered the bad shooting against the *Mousquet*, and gunnery practice was at once instituted. Meanwhile surgeons in the sick bay learned from the badly-wounded French officer that the *Markomannia* had been sunk, and the *Pontoporos* had been captured, and relayed the news to von Müller. It indicated that the British were keeping a close watch off Sumatra, and he wondered whether the Penang radio would draw them into the Bay of Bengal. He did not know that the destroyer *Fronde* had wrongly assumed that the *Emden* had headed north toward Rangoon. This was to send British cruisers over to the Rangoon area, and generally to the eastern side of the Bay of Bengal, while the *Emden* was racing southward toward Sumatra.

Three of the French sailors died that first night, and they were buried at sea with full naval honours, with von Müller reading the scriptures in German and French.

The *Emden*'s course was now changed to run between Great Nicobar and the Little Nicobar Islands. Then she turned due south to intersect the Sabang-Colombo trade route. On October 29, with her continuing luck, the lookouts once again

sighted a smoke cloud on the horizon, and the cruiser raced forward to intercept.

The smoke cloud came from the English freighter *Newburn*, a ship of 3,000 tons loaded with rock salt for Singapore. Von Müller spared her in order to get the badly injured French sailors to the mainland hospitals. During the transfer the French officer died and was buried with naval honours. When the transfer of the wounded was completed, von Müller worked the *Emden* north north-west to fool the *Newburn*'s crew; then, when out of sight, he made a wide circular detour south and east, to meet the collier *Buresk* at Simalur. Again the *Emden* was free to roam, and von Müller took her, with the *Buresk* following, down the west side of Sumatra all the way to the Sundra Straits between Bali and Sumatra, over the very route he had traced on his voyage from the Pacific Islands to the Indian Ocean in August. There was no shipping of any value to be found, and he swung the *Emden* in the direction of the Cocos Islands, 800 miles south-west of his present position.

Unknown to von Müller, some 40 other ships were also heading toward the Cocos, and several of them were powerful warships.

The Anzac Convoy Sails

While the *Emden* was raising havoc in the Indian Ocean, the British were having their troubles in the rest of the world as well, and Churchill's critics were thundering for his resignation. Undaunted by their attacks he admitted that the situation was grim, but insisted that the turning point was soon to come. In this hope he was to be disappointed.

Von Spee was free to roam the southern oceans, and German raiders were terrorizing the Seven Seas. The British liner, *Grefield*, reached Teneriffe in the Canary Islands with the crews of thirteen ships which had been sent to the bottom of the Atlantic by the *Karlsruhe*, thus providing the first clue as to the whereabouts of this raider after her escape from a British blockade in the West Indies. The *Dresden* was loose in the South Atlantic, and would occasionally turn up on the west coast of South America. The *Königsberg* was continuing her depredations off the East African coast. Submarines were becoming more active in British home waters, and one of them sank the cruiser *Hawke* off Scotland, sending more than 500 crewmen to their deaths. Twelve days later the British dreadnought *Audacious* sank off the Irish Coast, the victim of a submarine-laid mine.

Turkey had declared war against the Allies, and in South Africa a rebellion against the British led by Christian De Wet was in full swing. This action removed some of Churchill's cruisers to South Africa when they were sorely needed elsewhere.

In Germany, the Kaiser and his staff were toasting their

triumphs, and the Emperor, who had often been contemptuous of his navy, took special note of the successes of the *Emden*, which were still making headlines in newspapers all over the world. To the chief burgomaster of the town of Emden, he sent the following message: "I congratulate the town of Emden on its godchild in the Indian Ocean whose bold cruising deeds fill every German heart with pride and joy."

The Kaiser ordered celebrations in Berlin, Hanover, and in von Müller's home-town of Blankenburg. He also bestowed the Iron Cross First Class on von Müller and the Iron Cross Second Class on his cruiser.

At this moment in the world conflict, the German war machine was smashing the Russians on the Eastern Front, and had pounded the British and French forces on the Western Front with merciless precision, sending them reeling into retreat. In Tsingtao, however, the German defenders were being slowly battered into submission by the guns of the Japanese fleet, and the beleaguered city might have already fallen had it not been for the torrential rains which bogged down the advancing columns of Japanese and British troops.

And it was only a matter of time before Vice-Admiral Sada-kichi Kato would sail his battle squadrons into Kiaochow Bay. At present, the delay in the sea assault was being caused by the big guns of the German forts, by the saturation of the approach waters with thousands of mines, and the well-laid shells of the old *Kaiserin Elizabeth*, which blocked the main channel like Horatius at the bridge, further supported by the aerial directions given each day by Oberleutnant-zur-See Gunther Pluschow in his Rumpler Taube aircraft.

This small aeroplane, looking more like a Da Vinci sketch than a flying machine, managed to discourage Japanese air attacks on the port, and on the *Kaiserin Elizabeth*. Pluschow won everlasting fame as the first aerial fighter in history, shooting down Japanese pilots with his Luger pistol from as close as sixty feet, and creating havoc in the Japanese Fleet by dropping hand-held bombs down enemy funnels.

But the end was inevitable, and soon the *Kaiserin Elizabeth* was sent to the bottom of the bay by a combined naval and air attack. A truce was arranged by the U.S. Consul in Tsingtao for

the evacuation of women and children. The land and sea attack on the beleaguered city was then intensified.

In Australia and New Zealand, governments were well aware that troops and war materials were sorely needed in Europe, but they were also mindful of the fact that von Spee and his cruisers remained at large in the Southern Hemisphere, while lone raiders, such as the *Emden*, were causing havoc along their trade routes. The criticism which British politicians levelled at the Admiralty was surpassed by the outspoken condemnation of the Australians and the New Zealanders.

“It is quite apparent that the Germans are ruling the high seas,” snapped Sir Andrew Fisher, Prime Minister of Australia, and colonial newspapers echoed his feelings. Churchill refrained from answering the charges, but he mentions in his memoirs of the war at sea that the press and public were not in the position to understand all that the Admiralty was doing. Since they had no access to the war files, they could hardly appreciate the world-wide implications of Britain’s strategy.

However he did find it necessary to issue a memorandum on the state of the war at sea, in an attempt to quell the rising tide of discontent. He then proposed a three-week delay while a re-grouping of warships was arranged to assist the convoy. After which the following proposal was made by the Admiralty:

to send the *Minotaur* and the Japanese *Ibuki* to Wellington to fetch the New Zealand convoy and escort it westward along the Australian coast, picking up the Australian transports on the way and bringing the whole group to its destination.

Further howls of protest from the stubborn Dominions greeted this suggestion. This time it was not the lack of protection that they were complaining about – but the introduction of a Japanese warship into the picture. They were already looking with distaste and suspicion upon the movements of the Japanese warships below the Marshalls and in the Ladrones. The speed and determination with which these ships were moving into the former German colonies was creating grave misgivings in the minds of the Australians and New Zealanders. They knew that

the *Yahagi* and *Chikuma* were hunting the *Emden* – yet they almost hoped that the *Emden* would emerge from the hunt unscathed.

Typical of the Australian Navy's feelings toward the *Ibuki* was the attitude of the commander of H.M.S. *Minotaur*, who sent the following undiplomatic signal to the Australian Naval Board: "I request information as to whether the Japanese battlecruiser, *Ibuki*, on arrival with *Minotaur* at Australian ports, would expect to salute the flag, thus observing that the *Minotaur* was the Senior Officer."

Snapped Admiral Cresswell, speaking for the Naval Board: "We consider that active service in alliance with our flag, and in company with a senior ship flying our flag, is a mark of respect to the British Empire higher than any salute."

The commander of the *Ibuki*, who had heard the transmission while *en route* to Australia, signalled his own reply to the Admiral's message:

Please allow me to express to the Naval Board, on behalf of the Japanese Navy, my deep appreciation of the friendly action so fittingly expressed in the telegram to the captain of the *Minotaur*. We are grateful to Providence for the honour of co-operating with our allies in the restoration of peace of the world, and trust Providence will further honour us with an opportunity of co-operating actively and to some effect in the defence of common interest in Far Eastern waters.

This message was re-transmitted to the commander of the *Minotaur*, who no doubt received it with appropriate comments. The exchange was only one of many on the subject of Japanese participation.

But the Australians still refused to budge, and the British Government was profoundly disturbed. Churchill asked for, and got, another warship from the Japanese, the *Nisshin*, a heavy cruiser on duty in the South China Sea. But heading through the island chain at high speed on October 12, to reach her convoy duties, the *Nisshin* ran on a coral reef and was removed from active service.

As a result of this mishap, the Admiralty "reluctantly"

ordered the Australian cruiser *Sydney* from Admiral Patey's command off New Guinea, and Australia and New Zealand were at long last satisfied with the protection being deployed to guard their troops.

Minotaur, the battleship *Ibuki*, and the small destroyers *Philomel* and *Psyche*, with 10 transports between them, departed from Wellington, New Zealand, for Hobart on the island of Tasmania to pick up troops there and then travel on to Albany and St. George's Sound on the Australian south-west coast. The Australian Naval Board issued orders that all Australian troop and supply ships must reach the same destination by October 28. There were 26 vessels in the Australian convoy, ranging in size from the giant 15,000-ton *Euripides* to the small 5,000-ton horse transports.

The *Minotaur* took charge of the 36 transports and was ready to lead them to Europe via Colombo, Aden, and Port Said. But at departure time the *Minotaur* was given a "hold" order. The rebellion in South Africa was getting out of hand, and the British High Command thought it advisable to route the Australian and New Zealand troops to Europe by way of the Cape of Good Hope. Then, if General Botha in South Africa was unable to overcome Christian De Wet's rebels, the Anzacs could be set ashore at Capetown to assist in the struggle there.

While these new orders were being processed, General Botha made his break-through and the rebel Boer forces were on the run. The original sailing plans were immediately reinstated, and on November 1, 1914, almost three months after the declaration of war, the Australian and New Zealand troops got under way on the long, lonely trip to Europe.

At 6.25 a.m. the cruisers *Minotaur* and *Sydney* sailed from the Sound and took their positions on either side of the channel through which the convoy ships would sail.

At 6.45 a.m. the First Australian Division sailed. At 7.15 a.m. the Second Division sailed. At 7.55 a.m. the Third Australian Division cleared the Sound, and at 8.20 the New Zealand Division cleared. By 8.53 all the transports were at sea. Meanwhile, the *Ibuki* had gone ahead to the city of Fremantle to pick up two transports, *Medic* and *Ascanius*, with the soldiers from Western Australia; they joined the convoy on November 3.

There were 38 ships in the long sprawling convoy, protected by the four warships. In front and leading all vessels was the *Minotaur* with the Australian transports following in three lines abreast. According to orders, each of the vessels was 800 yards from the nearest ship of her line, and exactly one mile from her nearest neighbour to the side.

To the rear of this imposing array came the New Zealand transports in two parallel lines of five each.

Four miles off the starboard side of the convoy steamed the *Ibuki*, always distinguished by her heavy black plumes of smoke. And similarly, four miles off to port, steamed the cruiser *Sydney*. Far astern, and just within sight of the last ship of the convoy, hovered the *Melbourne*, keeping the rearguard watch.

The *Ovieto*, which was ahead, maintained the course for the entire convoy, but the speed was kept down to a snail-like 10 knots, because that was the fastest that the little horse transport *Southern* could travel. The orders were that no vessel was to lag behind the rest. It was too dangerous.

The next land they would see would be the Cocos Islands and by then they would be half-way to Ceylon. And, as was mentioned earlier, the *Emden* was also heading toward these same islands.

This long-delayed departure of the sprawling Australia-New Zealand convoy for the European war theatre took place just in time. Had it been postponed for another 72 hours, it is logical to assume that it would not have sailed until the end of 1914. A naval engagement was about to take place off the western coast of South America which was to cause such widespread repercussions in Australia and New Zealand that if it had been possible to recall the convoy they would have done so instantly.

Coronel and After

Von Spee and his cruiser squadron, moving steadily eastward across the South Pacific, reached Easter Island on October 14 and remained there for four days while he coaled his ships, and provisioned them with water and fresh vegetables and fruits from the island. From there he sent three transports to Honolulu for internment. They were empty, and would only be a burden to his future plans. On October 18, he sailed eastward for the Chilean Island of Mas a Fuera, 550 miles west of Valparaiso. During the eight days it took him to travel this distance (he was conserving fuel), the crews of the warships practised constantly at their gunnery during battle manoeuvres, until von Spee was thoroughly satisfied with their marksmanship.

While von Spee was working toward the South American coast, another Admiral was edging toward von Spee. He was Sir Christopher Francis Maurice Cradock, R.N., a man of great bravery, the darling of Mayfair, and a close friend of King George V. Unfortunately for the British, he was also a poor naval officer. From the start of the war Cradock had been given command of the South Atlantic Squadron. But the process of reaching his zone of command (the waters on either side of South America) involved a leisurely cruise, during which wide sweeps were conducted in the Atlantic in the hope of bagging a German commerce raider, particularly the *Karlsruhe*, or the *Dresden*. Having no success on the Atlantic, Cradock moved through the Straits of Magellan to search out and destroy German merchantmen, active in the coastal waters off the western shores of both North and South America.

Cradock's squadron consisted of the flagship *Good Hope*, the cruisers *Glasgow* and *Monmouth*, an old battleship, the *Canopus*, and an armed auxiliary vessel, the *Otranto*. They constituted a formidable unit only because of the heavy guns of the *Canopus*.

But the ambitious Cradock was frustrated by the battleship's lack of speed. The Admiralty had given him explicit orders never to abandon the *Canopus*, thus leaving his cruisers without the protection of her guns. Nevertheless, and with an apparent utter contempt for von Spee's power, this is precisely what Cradock did. Even the information that the German cruiser *Dresden* was in Chilean waters did nothing to alter his decision.

On October 26 von Spee was joined by the *Dresden*, and the entire squadron now sailed toward the Chilean coast, 400 miles away, with the flagship *Gneisenau* in the lead and the cruisers *Scharnhorst*, *Nürnberg*, *Dresden*, and *Leipzig* following in line astern. Together they formed the most powerful German squadron at sea. They reached the South American coast on November 1, and their arrival was reported to the British Consul in Valparaiso.

In London, Churchill reacted quickly. He wirelessly Cradock to concentrate his squadron around the *Canopus* and await the arrival of the cruiser *Defence*, which was being rushed from the South Atlantic to join him. But Cradock never received the signal — events were moving much too quickly. Fifty miles off the Chilean peninsula of Coronel the two squadrons met head on.

Cradock wirelessly the *Canopus*, 250 miles astern, that he had chanced upon the German cruisers and that "I am now going to attack the enemy." It was 4.30 p.m. and the lines of battle began to form.

At 5.15 p.m. the squadrons were 18,000 yards apart. Von Spee decreased the speed of his lead ships slightly to close up his ranks. At 6.07 p.m. the two squadrons were 15,000 yards apart and converging. The sun was starting to set, and von Spee was almost ready to start the battle. He closed the gap more sharply now, taking great care to keep out of range of the *Good Hope*'s guns.

At 6.34 p.m., the range, slightly less than 12,000 yards, was called out aboard the *Scharnhorst*. Von Spee ordered the opening broadsides from his starboard guns, and so began the Battle of Coronel.

Churchill called it: "The saddest naval action of the entire war."

The *Scharnhorst* engaged the *Good Hope*, the *Gneisenau* fought against the *Monmouth*, the *Leipzig* and *Dresden* against the *Glasgow* and *Otranto*. However, as soon as the first German shells plumped into the water, 500 yards short of the *Good Hope*, Cradock ordered the *Otranto* out of line. As she began to turn, she was hit, but not dangerously, and she was able to work westward from the range of the flashing guns.

Even before the firing commenced, the main deck 6-inch guns of the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth* were badly affected by spray, while the German guns mounted high on the main decks were not bothered by the cascades of water from the bow, and the choking spray carried by the gale-force winds. Within minutes the gunnery of von Spee's men overwhelmed Cradock. He never even got the chance to use his powerful 9.2-inch guns on the foredeck because the early salvo of the Germans disabled them. The German shooting was deadly. The third salvo of the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* set both the *Good Hope* and *Monmouth* afire. In ten minutes the *Monmouth* sheered off the line to the west and wallowed in the water about 200 yards from her original path. Her foremost turret, shielding her 6-inch guns, was in flames, she appeared to be reeling and shaking and she fell back into line, and then out again to the east, her guns roaring intermittently.

Darkness was gathering fast and the range had narrowed to 8,000 yards.

The fourth salvo of the *Scharnhorst* completely disabled the *Good Hope*. This broadside laid a pattern of death and destruction neatly along her entire main deck. The conning tower received a direct shell burst. All the officers on the bridge were believed instantly killed by the salvo, and the engine-room telegraph, the steering and the fire controls were knocked out. The next salvo, right on the mark, demolished the forward gun turret, and the *Good Hope* erupted into a mass of flames.

Officers on the *Glasgow* saw the *Good Hope* sheer from the line and limp westward, the flames mounting to her masts. It was impossible for her men to stop the exploding fury, and none of the other ships could come to her aid. She moved slowly westward into the darkness leaving the *Glasgow* and the *Monmouth* to defend themselves against the impossible odds. Then, at 7.23 p.m. the fires reached her magazine and she blew up, the reverberations of her death echoing over the troughs of the waves. Down to the depths she plunged, taking with her the foolhardy Cradock, and more than 900 officers and men.

At 7.26 p.m., the German cruisers ceased fire, but the slaughter was not over. When the *Monmouth* sheered from the line for the second time and headed eastward, her commander was hoping to reach the Chilean coast or Santa Maria Island, 13 miles to the south-east. Darkness had settled over the waters quickly, and it seemed that the *Monmouth* had apparently escaped detection; though down at the bows with the waves breaking up to her conning tower, she nevertheless was making several knots an hour and might have made land. But there were 100 wounded men in her sick bays, and she had several fires still glowing below the main deck and not yet under control. For two hours the cruiser struggled through the heavy seas, trying to reach safety before the next morning when she would surely be discovered.

But at this moment the *Nürnberg* sailed out of the north-east and crossed to the rear of von Spee's battle line, which was moving south to try to locate the *Glasgow* and the *Otranto* in the darkness. At 8.45 p.m. the *Nürnberg* lookouts saw a small fire to the north-west and the cruiser swung swiftly in the direction of the glow. She came upon the *Monmouth*, limping ever eastward. At close range, the *Nürnberg* sent three shells into the stricken cruiser and the *Monmouth* slipped beneath the waves carrying all 700 hands to their deaths.

Meanwhile, the *Glasgow*, badly damaged with a gaping nine-foot hole in the port bow, swung from her southward course and turned south-east and then east to reach the Chilean coast.

The battle of Coronel was over. Some 1,654 British sailors

went to the bottom. Von Spee had two men wounded, and they were only slightly injured when a British shell failed to explode and bounced off the foredeck of the *Scharnhorst*, hurling several empty shell casings in their direction.

The next morning von Spee sailed his flagship up the line to the cheers of the crews assembled on the ship's decks. His flags, snapping in the south wind and framed by the impressive snow-capped peaks of the Andes, spelled out this message:

"With the help of God, a fine victory for which I express appreciation and good wishes to all my crew."

Von Spee was now master of both the South Pacific and the South Atlantic.

"The loss of our cruisers off the Chilean coast is a climax of a long bungle in the Pacific," sneered Governor-General Ferguson in Melbourne, promising a sharp discussion between the Australians and the English over the situation. "The maxim of seeking out the enemy's ships and destroying them has been ignored."

And now a new situation had developed. Where would von Spee go? The Admiralty was convinced he would strike for home, as an intercepted wireless message had instructed him. But the Australians and New Zealanders believed he was headed for just one place – their homelands.

Their governments at once attempted to recall their First Contingent, but the escort warships had been strictly forbidden to break radio silence, except on receipt of a special code prefix which only the Admiralty and the commanders of the warships possessed. As a result, the troops continued without interference from politicians at home but concerned about the whereabouts of the *Emden*.

Could she be stalking the Australian–New Zealand convoy? Von Müller certainly would not have had any trouble doing so, that much is certain. The merchant captains of the transports so feared the possibility of the *Emden* slipping into their midst in the darkness of the night and causing widespread havoc, that they disobeyed the navy orders and left all lights burning. The long snail-paced convoy looked like a highway at night.

Had they known just how close the *Emden* was, they would almost certainly have panicked and probably set individual

courses for the nearest landfall. The Anzac troops themselves were unruly. They had been cooped up since early August, and the confines of narrow, ill-fitted, smelly ships provided an excuse for celebrations which lasted all day and all night. Every cabin window and every porthole shone like a beacon. Those soldiers not playing cards or enjoying any other entertainments which they improvised, spent their time on deck acting as lookouts, and peering into the darkness ahead for the enemy's presence which they felt sure would be silhouetted in the lights of the other ships.

Finally, on November 5, 800 miles out of Fremantle and half way to the Cocos Islands, which lay astride their course, the commander of the *Minotaur* found it necessary to issue the following order to all 38 ships of the sprawling convoy.

The attention of the Masters of the Australian transports is again drawn to the extreme importance of keeping accurate stations, especially at night. Last night, the Second Division straggled back seven miles, whereas their distance should have only been three miles. The Third Division straggled to six miles when their distance should only have been three and a half miles. By these careless acts, the Masters expose their ships to the increased risk of being torpedoed by the enemy . . . and they also involve the New Zealand convoy in danger.

The New Zealand convoy is keeping positions at three cables apart in excellent order and their great attention to the convoy orders as regards to their reduction of lights, merits my warm approval.

The *Medic* and *Gaelong* were signalling last night with their lights visible for at least ten miles and I again point out the necessity of reducing the power of your lights with blue bunting or other means.

But the naval orders had little or no effect upon the Australian captains, who were a rough lot, having sailed the Far Eastern seas for many years. They liked doing things their own way. They detested the authority of the navy and they cursed the laws that had forced them into convoy duty. Some of the

ships' masters wanted lights because they openly distrusted the steering abilities of their fellow captains. Their opinions, freely expressed in bar-rooms back home, had frequently provoked much bloody fighting. And the tensions and anxieties of their present situation did nothing to either increase their confidence or allay their fears. So the great convoy, with its 30,000 troops and thousands of horses, moved like a snail across the trackless Indian Ocean, while its path for a thousand miles ahead was being criss-crossed by the cruisers *Hampshire*, *Yarmouth*, *Weymouth*, and *Gloucester*, the armed transports *Empress of Russia*, and *Empress of Asia*, the Japanese cruisers *Yahagi*, and *Chikuma*, and the Russian cruiser *Askold*.

This scattered naval force was looking for just one ship, the *Emden*, which incidentally was working closer and closer to the convoy, though unaware of its presence.

On the morning of November 6 a strong wireless signal split the busy air. It was the Cocos Islands transmitting station, sending the following message every hour on the hour: URGENT . . . NC . . . URGENT . . . NC

The *Minotaur* was "NC," leading the convoy, but the commander refused to acknowledge the signal, suspecting a trick from the *Emden*.

On November 7, URGENT . . . NC . . . NC . . . continued, every hour on the hour. And still the commander of the *Minotaur* refused to break radio silence. The *Emden* jitters were everywhere.

On November 8, however, the Cocos transmitter had notified the British Admiralty that it was unable to raise the *Minotaur*, and the secret code number was provided. This time the signal was acknowledged by the *Minotaur*, her commander realizing there was now no trick involved. He was ordered to leave the convoy at once and proceed at high speed to South Africa, where the rebellion was gaining strength. He could hardly believe his ears. What a terrible time to leave the convoy which was just at this moment entering hostile waters. But orders were orders. The *Minotaur* departed and the *Melbourne* moved to the lead, taking charge of the convoy. The *Ibuki* remained in the starboard position, and the *Sydney* on the port-side. The rear was left unprotected.

The Cocos Islands

In November 1914, and for some thirteen years prior to this date, the British had been operating an important wireless and cable station on the Cocos Islands. It was the only place in the vast Indian Ocean that could be reasonably termed the "closest point" to Fremantle, Singapore, Capetown, and the important cities of the Asian mainland. And by wireless and submarine cable these vital cogs of the British Empire were linked to each other and to the Motherland.

The Cocos were a collection of twenty coral atolls, gathered together to form an emerald horseshoe of colour in the trackless blue of the Indian Ocean, 700 miles below the equator and 600 miles west of the nearest landfall, which was Java Head.

An integral part of this group, but separated from the horseshoe configuration by 15 miles of ocean, was a lone atoll, protruding from the great depths and bearing the typical appearance of all coral structures that have grown atop the shores of sunken islands. Shaped like a perfect ring and composed of sand and sharp coral with a scattering of hardy coconut palms that had managed to survive the ravages of hurricanes, this isolated intruder was known as North Keeling Island.

The entire collection was variously known to mariners as the Cocos-Keeling Group or simply, as the Cocos Islands.

The famous naturalist, Charles Darwin, spent some time on these islands during the famous round-the-world voyage of the *Beagle*. He fell in love with the breath-taking beauty of the coral ramparts. "If there is a paradise on earth, it is the

Cocos-Keeling," he wrote. "I can hardly explain the reason, but there is, to my mind, much grandeur in the view of the outer shores of these lagoon islands. There is sublimity in the barrier beach . . . the margin of green bushes and the tall coconut palms . . . the solid flats of the old coral rock . . . the line of furious breakers."

Charles Darwin was only one of many who visited the Cocos and were profoundly affected by the colour and the tranquillity of the lagoon. This lagoon, which was always like a millpond, was eight miles long and seven miles in width. It was rightly named Port Refuge by the early traders, who paid frequent visits to the islands to replenish their stocks of fresh water from the island ponds and gather the eggs of turtles and birds, both of which abounded on the atolls. The colours of the lagoon were ever changing, according to the moods of the weather and the behaviour of the multitudes of living objects beneath its tranquil surface. It was generally an iridescent greeny-blue, and the sparkling surface was continuously churned by swarms of multi-coloured fish which raced for ever through the warm shallow waters, dashing about in rainbow clusters, over and around the branching coral. The sands that lined the lagoon were brilliant white and as soft as talcum.

On the seaward side the coral cliffs fell abruptly away in slopes that were steeper than many of the world's tallest mountains. The restless ocean for ever churned against these windward edges, serrating the barrier reef with deep channels through which the waves continuously surged and drained away. Pink algae covered the underlying coral, smoothing the sharp stone skeletons of marine life and adding to the pastel beauty of the underwater gardens. These delicate colours have not changed through eons of time. It was to take a modern adventurer to deepen the pastels with red, and flaw the eternal beauty with the dead.

Of all the explorers through the centuries who found the Cocos to their liking, none was more colourful than Alexander Hare. An English scalawag, who had managed to purchase a harem of some 200 Malay virgins during the early days of the nineteenth century, he settled in these islands to raise both coconuts and children. But all good things must come to an

end, and Hare's idyllic amatory despotism was cut short by the arrival of a Scottish freebooter named John Clunies-Ross.

Searching for fresh water, Clunies-Ross anchored his sailing bark in the Cocos lagoon on November 27, 1827, and stared goggle-eyed at the mass of sinuous naked maidens, all of them eager to escape from Hare and offer their charms to new and younger masters.

Fortunately, Clunies-Ross had with him a score of sex-starved Scottish sailors, and it didn't take much to convince his crew that the Cocos would be a suitable place to pioneer and settle.

Hare objected strenuously to the intrusion, but was helpless against the overwhelming odds, and soon his ladies were disappearing one by one into the eager arms of the seamen. In order to preserve what was left of his harem, Hare forced his remaining wives to build a coral fortress on his Island of Pula Tikis, but even this last ditch defence could not for ever imprison them. Finally, with his harem reduced to less than twenty (the fat, the ugly and the pregnant), Hare packed up the remnants of his idyllic dictatorship and sailed from the Cocos, vowing never to return. John Clunies-Ross remained on the islands to found his own dynasty, his heirs enjoying the title of "the uncrowned kings of the Cocos." They are there today, growing coconuts and selling copra, residing on the original family islands of Home Island and Pula Selma, both located at the southernmost part of the island group, in the graceful curve of the horseshoe.

The Island of Pula Tikis was by far the largest of the Cocos Islands, and made up most of the eastern side of the horseshoe. Its name was changed to Direction Island, and it was here that the British constructed a cable booster station for three undersea submarine cables and erected the wireless station that was powerful enough to receive and be heard by the distant shore stations of the continent. In 1909 an organization named the Eastern Telegraph Company received a charter to operate the communications centre. For the men who serviced the equipment, for the telegraphers, for the cooks, the doctors and the laundrymen, it was a life of utter loneliness, broken only at rare intervals when a mail ship would pass their

way and drop waterproof sacks into the ocean – to be retrieved at the discretion of the winds and the sea.

It was the Morse key that brought the world to the solitary island. Most of the day and far into each night the men of Direction Island would gather in the operations room and listen to the Morse signals tell the story of a world holocaust, which was so far away that it was impossible to comprehend its dangers, its horrors, or its scope. But the Morse key which brought the world to the Cocos' doorstep would also attract the *Emden*, about which the telegraph and cable crew had heard so much for the past several weeks. The daily adventures of this will-o'-the-wisp raider kept the monotony of station life to a liveable minimum.

Von Müller had long ago decided to raid the Cocos Islands. He had put off the visit several times because he was having too much success in the Bay of Bengal, but now, with the concentration of enemy strength in the bay, he decided that this was the opportune time to destroy the base. It was another link in his chain of plans for the month of November.

As was his custom, he called his officers to a meeting in the wardroom to explain his future moves in this dangerous game of naval chess. What he said to them he later recorded in his diary:

Apart from the material damage which the enemy will suffer by the destruction of the cable and wireless station and the temporary interruption of telegraphic communications between Australia on the one hand, and England and other countries on the other, I hope also to effect a general unrest among shipping to and from Australia, by creating the impression that we will proceed to harry the steamer traffic south and east of Australia.

The raid will cause a withdrawal from the Indian Ocean of at least some of the English cruisers which are taking part in the hunting down of my *Emden*. My intention is, after carrying out this raid on the Cocos group, to make for Socotra and cruise in the Gulf of Aden and then on the steamer route between Aden and Bombay.

Such a plan seemed to be tactically feasible, and yet von Müller admitted that every time he thought of raiding the islands,

something inexplicable had always occurred to make him hesitate. He was tormented by misgivings. He had never had these feelings before.

"What a place for the English to lay a trap for us," he confided to von Mücke. "They could keep watch for us every day, and when we came in sight, could alert every warship within hundreds of miles, and we would be in the centre of a rapidly closing trap. It is also possible the English may be hiding a heavy cruiser at the Cocos, just for us. It's risky. We must be very careful, very careful indeed, Helmuth. This one, like Penang, must be thoroughly rehearsed and planned to the split second."

Because of his apprehensions, von Müller decided to raid the Cocos at dawn, stealthily moving upon the unsuspecting station in the darkness of the night, timing the approach so as to have a clear picture of the harbour of Port Refuge, just as the first streaks of dawn would be awaking the Indian Ocean day.

Having worked out the details of the raid with his officers, he decided to make the attack on November 8. But two unrelated events were to cause him to postpone his plans for twenty-four hours, and one of them would trick him into making the raid, despite the delay.

The first event was his failure to meet his collier *Exford* on November 7, so that he could fill the bunkers and be able to out-race an enemy for days if the Cocos turned out to be a trap. The second was the hourly signals emanating from the Cocos, finally answered by a warship in the not-so-distant vicinity.

When he finally contacted the *Exford* on November 8, he was furious over the delay and arranged for Lauterbach to take charge of the collier and to meet him 1,200 miles due west of the Cocos. He decided to keep the *Buresk* with him because she was fast. If events of November 9 proved to be peaceful, he would coal *Emden* in the Cocos lagoon, and if the situation proved otherwise, they might both be able to escape.

The *Exford* officers informed the angry von Müller they had raced away from the meeting place on the 7th because they had spotted a strange smoke cloud on the south-east horizon. They presumed it was the warship "NC" which the Cocos radio

finally raised. It was in fact the Australian–New Zealand convoy, but the crew of the *Exford* had been too anxious to escape detection to risk lying smokeless and attempt to identify the smoke cloud. Fearing to break radio silence, particularly with a warship in the area, the *Exford* slipped north-westward, intending to explain the failure to contact the *Emden* when they met each other twenty-four hours later.

The *Exford*'s caution and the presence of a British warship near the Cocos combined to make von Müller delay his intended raid. It was deemed possible, indeed, that the *Exford*'s mystery ship might have been the warship "NC," which the *Emden*'s intelligence officers thought was the cruiser *Newcastle* or the cruiser *Minotaur*. It occurred to no one that the *Exford*'s intruder was the Australian convoy, spewing a single smoke cloud on the distant horizon. Had they done so, von Müller would have attacked, and there is every reason to believe he would have exacted the most frightful toll of the war at sea. But because of the unbroken radio silence except by "NC," the convoy's presence remained cloaked by the wilderness of water that surrounded it.

Resistance measuring by the *Emden*'s wireless centre showed "NC" diminishing in signal strength, and by the night of November 8 she was judged to be almost 200 miles away and getting further by the hour. Von Müller decided to attack the Cocos in the morning, although he could not shake from his mind the question as to why a British warship was in the vicinity of the islands, and why she had remained silent an entire day without answering the messages intended for her. British cruiser commanders did not sleep on their job, so why did this ship not wish to break radio silence, he kept asking himself. Had the *Emden* been spotted somewhere between Sumatra and the Cocos? Had the *Exford* been seen and identified before being swallowed by the vastness of the sea? Why was the cruiser in such a hurry, and why would she be working westward?

These questions puzzled von Müller, for he knew that somewhere, sometime, the luck of the *Emden* would cease; each day he had to be more careful as the odds for survival decreased.

But now that he had decided to attack the Cocos in the

morning, he placed his navigator, Hans Kloepper, aboard the collier *Buresk* with orders to cruise 15 miles north of North Keeling Island. This would be far enough away to escape if the *Emden* should chance upon a hostile warship in the Cocos group, but near enough to hurry to the *Emden*, and coal her while the bluejackets were destroying the wireless station on Direction Island, if the area was clear of the enemy. Under no circumstances was Kloepper to venture to the meeting unless he had explicit orders to do so. If no signal was transmitted to him by von Müller by seven o'clock, he was instructed to steer for the Attu atoll in the Chagos Islands and await the *Emden* there. Kloepper pointed out to von Müller that the transmitter of the *Buresk* had broken down for the past two days, and he was not sure that it could be repaired in time to answer any signals in the morning.

"How will you know we have received your signal?" Kloepper asked von Müller as he was leaving to take over the *Buresk*.

"I will send a signal at seven, and if you do not reply then I will send two more, so that you will understand you are to come to my side."

Von Müller's sarcasm irritated Kloepper, and when he boarded the *Buresk* he was angry and tired and did not bother about the broken transmitter. He would see to it the next day. It was a decision that would contribute to a chain reaction of bad luck. As the *Buresk* pulled away from the *Emden*, Kloepper was even too tired and irritated to signal FAREWELL AND GOOD LUCK, but he watched the *Emden* disappear southward as he set course for the west and his pre-arranged holding position north of North Keeling.

Then von Müller called a council of war with his officers to discuss and rehearse the plans for the dawn. Upon the wall of the wardroom he had affixed a map of the Cocos Islands, and he traced with infinite care the course that the *Emden* would take in arriving off Direction Island and the subsequent steaming into the Port Refuge lagoon. Gropius would handle the helm most of the time.

Von Müller's plan called for the *Emden* to inch her way into the lagoon, while the lookouts would be doubled to search for any sign of an enemy. If there was such a warship in the

harbour, the *Emden* would immediately attempt to sink her. But von Müller was also concerned with the other islands in the group and they were to be scanned constantly during the Direction Island operations in case they were hiding an enemy ship. He could not afford to take any chances as he had in past forays, because this time many of his officers and crew would be ashore, subduing the wireless staff and destroying the station. Von Mücke was to take two officers and forty-five men for the raid. His orders were to destroy the wireless station first, and then if there was time left and nothing going amiss, he was to attempt to destroy the three submarine cables which linked Australia, South Africa and the Dutch East Indies to other Empire lifelines. He was also ordered to seize all British code books and the records of all messages received and sent out by the station since August 1.

A single wail of the ship's siren was to be the signal for recall if the raid was to be terminated. Von Müller thought that the raid should not last more than two hours at the most; any more delay than this might be dangerous. The officers agreed.

If Direction Island should be garrisoned, the landing plan was to be abandoned. Instead, the *Emden* would shell the transmitting station and abandon any attempt at further action in the area, because the cables would then be singing the message that the *Emden* was in the islands. Von Müller was still nervous over the presence of a British warship in the area. He wondered if there were other ships around, but his alert wireless crew had been unable to pick up any signals that were in the vicinity. (The Australian convoy was keeping strict radio silence just over the horizon.)

Following the meeting with his officers, von Müller returned to his cabin to read the Bible. An hour later, unable to sleep because of the tension of the impending raid, he began to study the charts of the waters between Bombay and the port of Aden, where he hoped to begin a new series of shipping attacks after the Cocos raid. He was planning to head across the Indian Ocean to the Attu atoll, coal from the *Exford*, and then pounce upon the rich Bombay sea lanes, hoping to bag a convoy of Indian troops for Europe or South Africa.

He had coal supplies to last him for a month. In the

morning he would have food and water from Direction Island. It all seemed too easy. He worked quietly until 2.00 a.m. and then joined his officers in the conning tower. The *Emden* was cruising at slow speed into a slight south wind before acting on von Müller's time-table and the change of course toward the Cocos.

Von Mücke was below instructing his officers and men on their assignment at Direction Island. He went over the plan again and again until each man knew his task exactly. Then each member of the raiding party was fed hot soup and given a rifle and ammunition by the armourer. Each was outfitted in white shorts, blue jacket, and light tan cork helmet. Each man checked his attire and his arms carefully, as von Müller would be inspecting them before they departed the *Emden*, and his inspections were not casual by any standard.

At 3.00 a.m. von Müller joined Geerde on the bridge. The night was so quiet he could hear the breathing of the lookouts in the crows-nest above him. The southern constellations burned in bright, unearthly splendour against the blackness of the sky. The water on all sides had now become more phosphorescent than usual, and every little fish that passed near left a shimmering track behind it. A school of porpoise passed to port, sending up a glowing shower of spray, and the faces of those in the crows-nests and on the bridge could be clearly seen.

At 4.00 a.m. the sea turned dark again. Von Müller remained on the bridge as the *Emden* inched her way toward the entrance into Port Refuge. The fourth funnel was in place, all crewmen had been fed, and the landing force was standing by on the afterdeck, where two motor boats were being readied to ferry them to the shore. At 5.00 a.m. the first whisper of dawn lightly brushed the eastern sky. Within minutes a blood-red line marked the horizon, then the golds and pastel greens which heralded the new day were followed by flowing search-lights of rainbow-coloured hues. The navigation of the *Emden* had been perfect, and one mile ahead lay the silent palms of the Cocos etched in a continuous line against the sky. The cruiser approached the narrow bottle-neck entrance to the harbour with caution.

At this moment the *Emden* had a friendly visitor, the only

friendly visitor she would have this day of November 9, 1914. A beautiful snow-white tern appeared before the bridge and, without seeming to move its wings, hung motionless at arm's length from the startled officers on duty. Von Müller had to shift his position, because the tern was interfering with his binocular sighting of the beautiful atoll.

Closer now came the pounding surf of the reef, embracing the narrows on either side. Steuermann Monkediek was at the helm, with Gropius by his side calling out the course. A few minutes after 6.00 a.m., the cruiser was through the channel, and before her lay the vista of the lagoon, its surface a brilliant mirror for the panorama taking place in the eastern skies. The sun had now appeared, throwing into relief the line of blue-jackets standing at the after rails, ready for their trip in the cutters to the distant jetty, now visible off to port.

There was no warship in the lagoon. A white schooner rode at anchor near Home Island. Nothing else could be seen except the jungle of coconut palms and the 160-foot wireless mast of the station, six points off the port bow.

Von Müller acted. It was 6.07 a.m. He ordered von Mücke to make the raid. He waited to call the *Buresk* until the bluejackets had reached the Direction Island jetty. He did not want to break radio silence at this moment. The raid was to be a complete surprise.

It was.

The Trap

On Direction Island, the heralding of another day by the raucous jabbering of hundreds of birds in the palms and the seagulls hunting their breakfasts over the tranquil lagoon, failed to awaken D'Arcy Farrant, the amiable superintendent of the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company.

He was sleeping soundly in his cottage at the north end of the line of corrugated buildings which comprised the communications centre. Like the other members of the meagre staff, Farrant had retired late in order to listen to the news bulletins of the war, which were picked up more clearly after dark and particularly after midnight. He had listened intently to the description of the Calcutta newscast concerning the fall of Tsingtao. He heard that the German cruiser *Kaiserin Elizabeth* had been sunk; that the Japanese had lost 1,968 men in the final attack and had captured 2,300 Germans including Meyer Waldeck, while hundreds of other Germans and their Chinese allies fell to the Japanese bayonets; that the Japanese had lost one cruiser, a destroyer, and a torpedo-boat before subduing the protecting forts, and that the Japanese had 22,980 men in the campaign, while the British had 910 officers and men of the Welsh Borderers and 460 Sikhs of the 36th Sikh Regiment.

Farrant and the others had listened intently as the wireless told how General Yoshima Yamoda had raised the Japanese flag over the Tsingtao observatory at 7.00 a.m. on November 8, after a two-day blitz against the remaining forts, an assault that cost the lives of 878 Japanese first-line troops. The Japanese

took 4,000 prisoners, 15,000 tons of coal, and quantities of gold bullion to their home islands.

Farrant was not impressed. He had no love for the Japanese. He heard a news report attributed to Waldeck, who charged that England had betrayed the white race, and he shrugged.

The Dutch radio at Batavia gave more details of the final hours of Tsingtao, and then quoted the newspaper reaction in Germany, which was not broadcast from the Indian stations. Quoting the Berlin *Tageblatt*, the report said: "Never shall we forget the bold deed of violence of the yellow robbers. Perhaps Japan will rejoice over her cowardly robbery. But there will be a day of reckoning, and woe to Nippon. They have destroyed the most brilliant work of German colonization."

Farrant listened until the last of the war news was broadcast, and then he retired. On the way to his cottage, he thought it strange there had been no mention of the *Emden* during the past few nights, and he wondered what had happened to the cruiser that had provided him and his lonely associates with the most thrilling news of the war to date. He was still wondering what had happened to the raider when he fell asleep. The only light that burned now in the blackness of the settlement was in the wireless operations room. Under the light, fingering the Morse key and listening to the dot dash of the shore transmitters, was Charlie Beauchamp, the night operator of the station.

As the night wore on, Beauchamp continued to monitor the many messages that crackled and sang through the air. At one point he heard Calcutta radio report that the cruiser *Emden* "which had disappeared from her usual haunts" had been awarded the Iron Cross for her depredations in the Bay of Bengal. Beauchamp clucked his tongue and said to himself: "Thank God we're off the beaten track. I'll bet the *Emden* doesn't know we exist. Sometimes I wonder if anybody does."

At 6.00 a.m. Beauchamp roused himself from his rattan chair, walked to the stove, and put on the kettle for tea. It was his custom each morning to make tea, and to share it with the day operator, C. H. K. La Nauze, who would arrive in a few minutes. And while the kettle boiled he made a quick round of the installations, checking the circuits, the generators, and

other electrical equipment. Then he returned to the Morse key, to await the arrival of La Nauze.

Elsewhere on the island, another routine operation was taking place. Hop Ling, the Malayan laundryman of the station, was on the lagoon side of Direction Island beach, crawling along the soft sand on his hands and knees. At the north end of the island, near the flagmast, he stopped, grinning widely with satisfaction. His hands dug rapidly into the soft sand at a point where a track from the lagoon ended in sandy disarray. He found what he was looking for, a newly deposited batch of turtle eggs.

He had placed the eggs in his apron, and was turning back to the cookhouse when he paused midway in his turn. A slight change in the configuration of the harbour entrance had caught his attention. He stood transfixed, not able to believe his eyes, his blood seeming to freeze in his veins. A ghost ship had entered the lagoon. It was moving fast and silently.

For a moment Hop Ling could only stand and stare – as though hypnotized by the swiftly approaching ship. Then he dropped the eggs and hurtled with all his energy along the beach and through the palm forest to the settlement. Since Farrant's cabin was the nearest, he ran to the door and pounded on it furiously, screaming "Missa Farran . . . Missa Farran . . . boom boom come chop chop."

Farrant growled as he awakened to the shouting and the pounding. "What the devil do ye want, boy?" he grumbled. "Out with it."

It took Farrant several minutes to calm the badly frightened Malayan, and only then was he able to understand that something unusual had happened in the lagoon. He climbed to the roof of his cottage and peered over the tops of the low palms which extended between the cottage and the harbour. Farrant let out a shout, and La Nauze, on his way to the operations room, came running. So did Harold Ollershead, the station's doctor.

They gazed out at the unknown ship. She had four funnels – she must be British. In great excitement the trio ran to the operations room and told Beauchamp to signal a greeting to the ship and ask her identity.

At this precise moment, two other events were taking place. The *Emden*'s bluejackets had reached the Direction Island jetty, and were already running silently toward the operations section. And aboard the *Emden* von Müller was giving the order which would summon the *Buresk* to the lagoon to coal his cruiser.

Ashore, Beauchamp heard the wireless crackle its message in an unfamiliar code. "I can't understand her signal," he said. "It isn't meant for us. What shall I do?"

"Ask her what code she is using," suggested Farrant.

Beauchamp worked the key: "What code . . . what ship is that . . . what code . . . what ship is that. . . ."

There was no reply, but the *Emden* repeated two more signals to the *Buresk*, since this was the method agreed upon earlier to bring her to the *Emden*'s side.

Farrant was worried and he rung his hands for a moment, undecided what to do. Finally he said: "Put out a general call, I don't like this."

Beauchamp moved his right thumb and forefinger and the key began to chatter his message: NGH . . . NGH . . . NGH . . . STRANGE WARSHIP AT ENTRANCE . . . NGH . . . NGH . . . NGH . . . STRANGE WARSHIP AT ENTRANCE . . . NGH . . .

The *Emden* began to jam this signal with her transmitter. She almost succeeded, but the cruiser *Minotaur*, heading for South Africa, picked up the signal, at first loud and clear, then followed by an incomprehensible scramble of dots and dashes. She asked for a repeat of the message, and the *Emden*'s wireless crew got a fix on her position, notifying von Müller that she was almost 300 miles away.

"Good, good," he said. "In that case we haven't a thing to fear. Signal von Mücke to do a thorough job. My fears were groundless." He raised his binoculars to his eyes.

Farrant knew instantly that the deliberate jamming of the station's wireless meant only one thing. The warship was an enemy. He raced from the wireless room and headed for the next building to send an alert to Batavia. But he never reached the cable room. Into the clearing burst von Mücke and his men with rifles levelled. Within minutes the Morse keys had been destroyed, and axes put an end to the cable tape machines.

"I am sorry we must wreck your cables," said von Mücke, trying his best to be mannerly under the circumstances. "We are from the *Emden*, but we do not mean to harm you. However, we intend you should co-operate."

The station personnel was herded into the headquarters building while the sailors demolished everything in sight. In the cable room, where the battery of machines sent and received the punched tapes, the Germans pounded the equipment to pieces with heavy axes. Communication between the Cocos and the rest of the world ceased. And the cessation would have been final, had not one of the staff electricians run from one of the buildings just before the Germans rushed in. He managed to toss into the jungle foliage a number of batteries, a spare Morse key and other electrical material. By the time he was seen in the palm forest, he had hidden enough material to build a small transmitter later on.

The Germans at this point committed an act of folly, one which von Müller would never have approved, but one which von Mücke considered incidental. Von Müller would never have permitted the wanton destruction of anything that had nothing to do with the war effort. Von Mücke believed in destroying everything in sight. As a result, his men went below ground and demolished the valuable seismograph station, which measured the earth tremors in this lonely region and reported them to the rest of the world—Germany included. This action was inexcusable, and it brought apologies from Germany to Britain a short time later.

Following the destruction of all mechanical pieces in the station's operations buildings, the sailors turned next to the huge transmitting and receiving tower. They set dynamite charges at its base, lit the fuses, and retired to the shore. A tremendous explosion followed and the steel mast slithered to the ground in a cloud of fire and smoke.

It was precisely 8.52 a.m., and the shock of the demolition was heard and seen aboard the *Emden*. Von Müller had no sooner turned his attention to the area where the smoke and fire was raging above the palm trees when the after lookouts reported a strong smudge of black smoke on the northern horizon. Von Müller swung, his binoculars pressed tightly to his

eyes, and he watched the smoke for an agonizing five minutes. The flexing of his jaw muscles betrayed his nervousness, for he was worried at having so many of his men away from the ship and steam down in the boilers.

But the lookouts were reassuring some ten minutes later when they reported that the ship possessed one funnel and two masts. "Schön," replied von Müller with a nervous laugh of relief. "She is my *Buresk* on time for a change."

He then returned his attention to Direction Island and, still nervous, he heliographed von Mücke to hurry up the job.

But von Mücke was having his own troubles. The station staff would not co-operate in locating the submarine cables. Farrant and the others remained tight-lipped as von Mücke demanded that they assist his men. Destroying the terminals of these cables was not enough to make them inoperative, von Mücke knew. He would have to locate them in the lagoon and sever them to make the job complete and satisfactory.

But in the sharp-branching coral, his men could not find the cables. Von Mücke was becoming exasperated, and the heliograph blinking constantly from the *Emden* didn't help matters any. Finally, he demanded of Farrant in a menacing tone: "Exactly where are they? Or do you value your life."

"They cross the lagoon in shallow water, just 300 yards off the jetty," he replied.

A score of sailors stripped and dived into the warm waters from one of the cutters to search for the cables, but they were unsuccessful. Signalmen flashed a message to the *Emden* that the cables could not be found, and the cruiser made several passes before the jetty with her anchors dragging, in an attempt to snag the heavy lines. This manoeuvre also proved useless.

Von Mücke then told Farrant that unless he showed him where the cables lay in the water he would burn down the station. Farrant hesitated, and von Mücke ordered a torch to be put to one of the buildings. It blazed up furiously. Finally, threatened with more fire, and prodded by Schmidt's revolver, Farrant revealed where the cables crossed the lagoon, *en route* to the underground trench which led to the operations room.

Into the water went the sailors again. But locating the cables still proved to be extremely difficult. And when at last

they did locate one in the coral beds, it was a difficult task to raise it to the surface to be cut. Then it took ten minutes of chopping to sever the strands.

Von Mücke was furious when he learned that this cable was only a loose end lying in the lagoon, but his men had by now discovered the Perth cable. It took them a half hour to raise it. Again the cutting was a tedious problem, and back on the *Emden* von Müller became even more furious over the length of time being wasted. Heavy smoke was rising into the clear morning air from the blazing building, a signal that could be seen for many miles, and this upset him all the more.

Finally he ordered the siren sounded, and at the same time the signal lamp blinked the following message: ARBEITEN BESCHLEUNIGEN (Speed up the work at hand).

Von Mücke ignored the signal. The Perth cable was defying the axes, and there were still two more to locate. "The old man's like a cat with kittens," he said to Schmidt, who laughed uproariously.

Von Müller, receiving no reply from the shore party, heliographed a message for them to prepare to return to the ship. He ordered more steam and started the *Emden* toward the lagoon entrance to check on the *Buresk*, which should have arrived before this time.

But von Müller was to be disappointed. The *Buresk* was not coming to the Cocos to refuel his *Emden*.

She had received the three signals to proceed to Port Refuge, but she had scarcely started on her southward course than her commander, von Kloepfer, saw low on the horizon and immediately north-east of him, a warship travelling at top speed toward the Cocos.

He raced for the wireless room to warn von Müller. He ordered the emergency message to be sent, and then recoiled with horror; he had neglected to repair his transmitter. So although he was only thirty miles away, he was helpless to warn his fellow Germans of the rapidly approaching danger.

H.M.A.S. Sydney Investigates

Captain M. L. Silver of His Majesty's Australian Ship, *Melbourne*, believed in rigid punctuality, and he made a practice of accomplishing his routine duties on time, every day, with irritating regularity.

Nicknamed "Long John" by his crew, his presence on the bridge, in the wardroom, below in the engine room, and at a score of other places on his cruiser, could be predicted to the minute by his officers and men. They all took keen delight in searching for any deviation or blemish in the daily ritual.

He arose at 6.00 a.m. sharp. He washed, shaved, donned his uniform and reached the conning tower at 6.20 where he checked the log, scanned the nautical mileage made during the night, chatted briefly with the officer of the watch and his staff on the bridge, and finally asked the helmsman about the wind (though it was recorded on the status board), the ocean currents, and their effects on his ship. Then he would move briskly to the officers' wardroom for his cup of tea, which was followed ten minutes later by a substantial breakfast.

But Silver's routine on this bright morning of November 9, 1914, was to be seriously interrupted. His tea would remain untouched in the wardroom, as would his bacon and eggs which his cook was even now busily preparing.

It was 6.27 a.m., Calcutta Standard Time. Captain Silver had exactly two minutes left on the bridge before he would go below. It was sufficient for him to review the long straggling convoy which his *Melbourne* had been leading since the *Minotaur* had been summoned to South Africa. Looking aft through his binoculars, he noted the battleship *Ibuki* on his starboard

side, far astern and standing three miles off the convoy. To port, hull down and almost invisible, was the cruiser *Sydney*, keeping well astern to protect the rear of the convoy, as well as the western side.

Satisfied that all was in order on the bridge and in the convoy, he moved to the armoured door to start below for his tea when he was almost bowled over by a sub-lieutenant who burst through the doorway shoving a cablegram into Silver's hand.

Silver glanced at the message, swung instantly on his heel, and moved to the engine-room telegraph. He shoved it forward to "Full Speed Ahead," shouting at the same moment: "Sound Action Stations!"

The sirens on the *Melbourne* split the quietness of the early morning. Almost all the crew was in the mess having breakfast, and they raced for their duty stations carrying hot biscuits with them. "It must be for real," said one of the gunners, puffing up the ladder from below. "Old Long John would never have a practice during his bloody tea."

"Let's hope it's the Germans," said another. "So far it's been a ruddy dull war."

Silver read the cable once again and showed it to his officers in the conning tower. It was from NGH the call letters of the wireless station on the Cocos Islands. It was reporting the presence of a strange warship in its harbour.

"By God, it's the *Königsberg*," Silver exclaimed. "Have the message repeated in code. It could be a trick."

"More steam," he shouted into the engine-room voice pipe. "What's the bloody matter with you down there?"

As the stokers stepped up the pace by feeding huge amounts of coal into the roaring furnaces, Silver ordered a 45-degree turn to port. At the same moment he was informed that the wireless room could not raise the Cocos station. "One ship and perhaps two are deliberately jamming the Cocos station," one of his telegraphers reported.

"Then it must be the enemy," Silver shouted. "Inform *Ibuki* and *Sydney* we are going south to Cocos to investigate. Order *Sydney* into the lead."

A shout from one of his officers caused Silver to swing to his left and raise his binoculars. Then he cursed the day the

British Admiralty had sent the Japanese to assist him. The giant *Ibuki* had sheered from her line, was raising steam, and was heading south, right through the centre of the convoy. Her signal lamp was blinking. She had also picked up the alert from the Cocos and was going to investigate.

"What in God's name is going on?" snapped Silver. "Signal *Ibuki* to return to her position at once."

The heliograph notified the *Ibuki* of the order. But her Japanese commander refused to obey it. Black smoke was now coiling from her four huge funnels as she raised steam for the impending action ahead.

"Return at once," the *Melbourne* signalled again, and when the *Ibuki* ignored the persistent orders, Silver signalled her commander that he was committing an act of treason which would be severely dealt with by the Japanese Admiralty. This was the signal that forced the *Ibuki* to return to her position while the *Melbourne* turned and ran alongside, continuing the exchange of signals by flags.

Sick at heart, Captain Silver knew now that he could not leave the convoy. He would have to remain behind to control the impetuous commander of the Japanese battleship. It meant that he would be denied the action that he craved, the action that all his men wanted since they had been placed on duty. Plodding along each day, as slowly as the slowest horse transport, was not active duty as they understood it. Yet it is questionable whether Silver should ever have considered leaving the convoy. He was its leader, and to risk his ship in an action might have led to grave consequences, particularly if he were to prove unsuccessful.

"The bloody Japs have spoiled our chance," said Silver. "Order the *Sydney* to raise steam and report to me when ready."

Much time had been wasted. Thirty minutes had passed since the Cocos had spread the alarm. The response had been anything but speedy. But now, black smoke pouring from the *Sydney*'s four funnels indicated that she was getting up steam. But she was still in her convoy position.

At 7.10 a.m. the *Sydney* signalled that steam was up in her boilers, and Silver ordered her to proceed at once to the Cocos and investigate the wireless report. She was not to break radio

silence under any circumstances, unless she required assistance. *Sydney* swung from her position in the convoy, turned 45 degrees due south and headed for the islands, an estimated two hours' running time.

It was the Japanese who had inadvertently provided the cruiser *Sydney* with this date with destiny. The running aground of the *Nisshin* in the South Pacific islands was the reason why the *Sydney* had been plucked from Admiral Patey's command and sent to Australia on convoy duty. Then came the *Ibuki* incident, which earmarked her for a niche in naval history.

On her bridge stood her Commander, Captain John Collings-Taswell Glossop, R.N. He was every inch a seaman, from his calloused hands to his reddish, weatherbeaten face. He had served in the British and Australian navies for twenty-nine years. In many respects he was not unlike von Müller, whose skill he was soon to put to the test. Although two years older, Glossop had also devoted his life to the sea and was also unmarried.

Glossop loved the sea, and he knew the moods of the Indian Ocean like few other sailors. He had sailed this sea and the South Pacific from the time he was a cadet in training, and he knew the winds and the tides and the currents. As a result, he also knew how to squeeze the most from the ocean's moods, as well as how to counter her sly, unpredictable tricks.

Although he was only forty-three years old on this day of November 9, 1914, the years before the salt spray and the biting winds had left their indelible mark upon him. His face was lined with the furrows of a hard, tough life, and he was bronzed and leathery from the sun and the weather. He was at his customary position on the bridge, having just finished his breakfast, when he was taken by surprise. His wireless room had received the urgent message from the Cocos at the same time as the other ships. Glossop immediately rushed to the wireless room and was intending to notify *Melbourne* of the signal, when he realized that he had been forbidden to break radio silence. He wondered if the message was a trick, and he returned to the bridge, ready to order a light signal when he saw *Melbourne* raising steam. Then he saw the *Ibuki* also raising steam, and he said to one of his officers: "What the devil is going on?"

A short while later, as he watched the distant signalling between the two other warships, he received a signal from *Melbourne* to raise steam and report. When this duty was completed, he obeyed the next command and headed south to investigate the mysterious and sinister report from the now silent Cocos.

“What do you think of it?” he asked of his First Officer, Lieutenant-Commander J. F. Finlayson.

“It could be the *Königsberg*, sir. Or, it could be a trick to get one of us away from the convoy. I must say, sir, I don’t like it a bit.”

“You don’t think it could be the *Emden*, do you?”

“Good heavens, sir, I don’t think so. The Calcutta radio says we are looking for her near Bombay. If the enemy is at Cocos it must be *Königsberg*, and if that is so we have nothing to fear.”

“Bell-Salter.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Lt. Bell-Salter, snapping to attention.

“Inform all my officers that we are changing course, because we are going to investigate the report of a strange ship at the Cocos, two hours’ running. We will sound Action Stations after the crew have breakfasted. Do this, and report back to the bridge.”

Glossop gripped the rail of the bridge and stared straight ahead. He was tense and a little perturbed over the thought of impending action. He had certainly not expected any action on this convoy duty, which his crew were referring to as a “milk run.” At least not in this lonely, forgotten area. Why would the *Königsberg** be so far from her African haunts? Could the *Emden* have slipped through the British concentration around India and Ceylon? Hardly, he thought.

Action he welcomed. It was something that all his men had been awaiting, including the teen-age trainees he had aboard, and who were now a source of grave concern to him. He had reluctantly taken the cadets aboard his cruiser. It was only at the insistence of the Australian Naval Board and assurances

* The British Admiralty had never informed its cruisers on foreign stations that the *Königsberg* had been bottled up in the Rufiji River a week before by two cruisers on the East African command.

by the Admiralty that the *Sydney* would be used solely for troop support in the Bismarck Archipelago campaigns and convoy duty thereafter that prompted Glossop to relent and take on the cadets to supplement their naval college training. Several of the youngsters were from the training ship *Tingira* which was based in Sydney harbour.

Glossop had explained to his fellow officers why he had been reluctant to take the cadets. He was well aware of the bitterness that existed between the Australians and the Admiralty, and death or injury to one of these boys would bring severe recriminations. His own personal position was one in which a great deal of diplomacy was required. He was a member of the Royal Navy on loan to Australia, sailing her ship and commanding her men. It was a situation that could easily lead to trouble. He decided, therefore, that the best he could do now was to have the boys placed on duty in the ship's sick bay, far away from the guns and ammunition hoists, and from the open decks. Accordingly, he had one of his officers round up the cadets and place them under the care of the *Sydney's* surgeons, Dr. Len Darby and Dr. A. C. R. Todd. The cruiser's jovial chaplain, the Reverend V. A. "Shorty" Little, was also ordered to sick bay.

Meanwhile, Bell-Salter went through the ship informing his fellow officers that action could be expected in two hours' time. He found the *Sydney's* gunnery officer, Lt. Rupert Garsia, in his tub, and told him the news.

"You're pulling my leg," snapped Garsia.

"No, I'm not. Dash it all, can't you hear the propellers increasing speed. Wake up man and hop to it."

"Action Stations" had not yet been sounded and Garsia was the jokester of the cruiser. He called for his barber and had his beard shaved off, to the accompaniment of jeers from his shipmates. "If we are going to fight the enemy, I want to die clean shaven," he laughed.

Other officers and the crew members took the news in the same light-hearted manner. It was nothing to worry about. There was a chance for action but no one seemed sure. When "Action Stations" were finally sounded, the crew moved to their duties, grumbling and swearing because they thought it

was just another of the irritating drills which Glossop had subjected them to since the day the war had started. Glossop, however, was grim. The Cocos radio had not sent an SOS without reason, and her later signals had not been jammed by any friendly transmitter. The incidents added up to just one conclusion: the enemy was at the Cocos.

Since radio silence had been maintained by the convoy, no other British warships were informed of the incident at the Cocos. Both Glossop in *Sydney* and Silver in *Melbourne* thought the strange warship would be the *Königsberg* *en route* to join von Spee. Had they been informed by the British Admiralty that the *Königsberg* was no longer at sea, they would have known immediately that the *Emden* was the only other German warship that could possibly have been in these waters. It is logical to suppose that they would have then sent out a general alarm, since everyone was hunting the elusive raider.

But the *Emden* had been identified with the Bay of Bengal and the trade routes running between Singapore, Aden, and Colombo. To expect her in the lonely wastes of the Indian Ocean, in the vicinity of the Cocos, seemed absurd. The idea had been briefly considered and as quickly dismissed by Silver as well as Glossop. And the off-hand attitude of Glossop's officers toward the impending engagement arose from the contempt that the British and Australians felt for the *Königsberg*, which they considered old, weak, and small — certainly no match for the *Sydney*. On the other hand, the *Emden*, although a small cruiser like the *Königsberg*, had created a legendary aura about herself. She was a supership, invincible, dangerous, and unsinkable. She was the terror of Bengal, all sailors believed. Had the *Sydney*'s crew known the *Emden* was lurking just ahead, their attitude toward the impending action might have been very different.

Glossop, meanwhile, was preoccupied on the bridge and in the chartroom, issuing orders to his navigators and his gunnery officers. When he concluded his study of the charts, he called Finlayson to his side and the two left the conning tower and climbed to the canvas-covered bridge. The convoy was no longer in sight.

"Finlayson," Glossop began, "we may be heading into a trap.

There is no doubt in my mind that we have an enemy to deal with at the islands and that they must be shelling the installations there. We don't want to be trapped by carelessly venturing into Port Refuge, so I may decide to circle the islands first to see if there is an enemy in the lagoon. Then we could blockade the entrance."

"The Germans are tricky," replied Finlayson.

"Indeed, they are. But we have one thing in our favour – the best guns. I want you to talk with every gun's crew and attempt to inject some seriousness into this matter. My God, do they think that we are drilling each day for nothing and that war is only a series of drills? Look at them, down there, laughing and chatting. I want the men to know that we may be in for a real engagement. As you make your rounds, send my gunnery, range-finder, and central fire-control officers to the wardroom."

Finlayson scurried about *Sydney*, checking out the disposition of the crews and making double sure the cadets were out of sight. By the time he had made rounds and arrived back at the wardroom, the other officers had entered and were awaiting Glossop. He came into the cabin in a great hurry, followed by his chief gunnery officer Bell-Salter, and Lt. Don Rahilly, the officer in charge of central fire-control.

Spreading out the charts of the Cocos-Keeling Islands, the group studied the position of the various islands, the dangerous reefs and shallows, and the probable location of the enemy.

"Let us follow my suggestion and circle the Cocos first, instead of making directly for the harbour," said Glossop. His officers discussed the idea and agreed to the proposal.

"We can keep beyond the enemy range, sir; we can easily outshoot *Königsberg*," offered Lt. Rahilly.

"We should also try for a pattern of torpedoes," said Lt. J. C. MacFarlane. Glossop nodded and continued: "We should be careful at all times not to venture within the range of their guns. It is very easy to delay a turn because of some continuing action, and then we could find ourselves in a fine kettle of fish. We are agreed therefore to run along the east side of the Cocos and observe the situation. Then we can circle the islands on the west side or make a turn and attempt to come to grips at once with the enemy."

Lieutenants F. L. Cavage, R. C. Garsia, J. M. C. Johnstone, C. J. Pope, A. M. Martin, E. C. Behenna, and Eric Kingsford-Smith were among the officers who were briefed on the impending action. (Kingsford-Smith was a brother of Charles Kingsford-Smith who in later years was to contribute magnificently to the history of world aviation.)

At 9.00 a.m. Glossop and Finlayson returned to their command posts in the conning tower. The ship was running at top speed now, as Lts. Len Fowler and Charlie Dennis rode herd over 150 stokers in the dirt and heat below decks. The 22,000-horsepower engines were thrumming loudly and the entire ship vibrated as *Sydney* worked up to 26 knots.

Glossop raised his glasses at the same moment that the forward lookout excitedly reported the sighting of a ship 18 degrees off the starboard bow. She appeared to be smokeless, and as the *Sydney* closed the distance, she took the familiar form of a merchantman.

"She has only one funnel and a single mast. She could be a collier," said Finlayson. "We can double-check her after we have a look at the Cocos. She must be an enemy. We have nothing in this area that I know of."

"Are there any wireless messages?" asked Glossop, keeping his binoculars on the strange ship, which was in fact the *Buresk*.

"No sir, not since 8.05, when the *Minotaur* reported her last position."

The chronometer read 9.14 a.m. The forward lookout called to the conning tower that a line of green had formed south, south-west on the horizon.

"That is the Cocos," said Glossop grimly. What is our range to that line of coconut tops?"

"Thirteen point five miles, sir," reported Cavage.

The lookout called out again, this time shrilly and with great excitement, "Smoke off the starboard bow."

It was smoke, all right. It was heavy, oily, black smoke, coming from behind the coconut trees on Direction Island.

Glossop gripped the rail. "Is it the enemy or is it just a fire on the island?" he asked.

He didn't have long to wonder.

The Death of the Emden

The lookouts of the *Emden* had thus far in the cruise been extremely accurate in the spotting and identification of distant ships (even under the severest of weather conditions) in daylight and in darkness. Perhaps it will never be known why they made such an appalling mistake that morning of November 9, 1914, when they identified the fast-approaching *Sydney* as the collier *Buresk*. Mariners everywhere know that during the early morning hours of a bright summer day, when the sun is about ten degrees above the horizon, and bouncing its brilliance off the long, even swells of the sea, ships and other objects can take on strange shapes, particularly if the sun is to one side, as it was on this occasion. Closer and closer the ship came, and still no proper identification was made. Von Müller and the others on the bridge having convinced themselves that the approaching ship was indeed the *Buresk*, were now mainly directing their attention toward the activity on Direction Island.

At one point von Müller turned and eyed the growing smoke cloud which swept aft of the *Sydney*, forming a thick backdrop against which the outline of the cruiser could not be identified. He felt it unusual that so much smoke should be pouring from his collier. Turning to his officers he asked: "Why has she so much smoke? She's usually smokeless."

Von Guérard elected to answer. He reminded von Müller that the *Buresk* had had a fire in her bunkers the day before and that the use of some of the partly-burned coal would create

the heavy, carboniferous smoke cloud. Von Müller, not completely satisfied with the answer, now asked the lookouts to keep their eyes fixed on the ship. He became even more edgy a minute later when they reported that the vessel seemed to be travelling at a great rate of speed. Von Müller could not signal her because the *Buresk*'s transmitter was still unrepaired, but he again heliographed von Mücke: ARBEITEN BESCHLEUNIGEN.

Then, in a sudden flash of realization, von Müller knew that a mistake had been made. The strange ship was travelling much too fast and giving off too much smoke to be his collier. He sounded "Action Stations," while Chief Engineer Ellerbroek called for steam. The shovels in the hands of more than 100 youths began to follow the rhythmic pattern, shovel after shovel pouring the black stuff into the furnaces while the temperature around them rose to more than 100 degrees. The engines of the *Emden* began to turn over, and the vibration shuddered along the keel of the cruiser as she got under way. Von Müller headed her toward the Direction Island dock, signalling all the while for von Mücke to return and blowing the siren continuously to attract his attention. But still no response came from the island, and von Müller, fearing to be trapped in the harbour, gave the signal to abandon his men and headed the *Emden* toward the channel and the open sea.

Dashing through the narrow channel between the outcroppings of coral was a dangerous manoeuvre at 16 knots, but the *Emden* made it, her bow slicing the surface like a giant steel knife, her smoke coiling and twisting off her starboard side and drifting to the palm forests that lay along the eastern side of the group. The *Emden* was clear of the islands now, and it was precisely 9.19 a.m. The *Sydney* had wirelessed the *Melbourne*: SMOKE ON STARBOARD BOW.

On Direction Island, when the sirens of the *Emden* began to wail their urgent message across the Port Refuge lagoon, von Mücke was still at the wireless station with several of his men, destroying the equipment necessary to its operation. Offshore in two boats, Leutnants Roderich Schmidt and Eugen Gyssling were in charge of the detail raising (or trying to raise) the submarine cables, in order to sever them and then haul them into the depths of the lagoon. Knowing that von Müller was

nervous over the splitting of his crew made necessary by the raid, the party were convinced that the sirens were just his method of urging them to get the job done quickly. In fact, this general observation was confirmed when one of the heliograph signals to the party asked them to "hurry up the job."

However, when the *Emden* made several circles on the lagoon and the heliograph ordered them to return at once, von Mücke decided he had better return to the ship to see what was troubling his commander. But he never got the chance. Just as he was shoving off from the jetty in the cutter, he saw that the *Emden*'s anchor flag was at half staff, indicating that the anchors were being weighed. The cutter began to speed toward the *Emden* which had now turned toward the lagoon channel in the middle distance, and von Mücke now perceived with a sinking heart that the ship's battle flags were running to the topmast. He knew instantly that the *Emden* had sighted a strange ship and was storming seaward to investigate.

"But why all the hurry," von Mücke kept muttering to himself as he returned to the jetty and raced on foot to the northern tip of the island, accompanied by Schmidt and the station staff men, Farrant, La Nauze, and Ollershead. They ran through the palm forest and on to the open stretch of beach. Reaching a ridge of coral which had been thrown up by wind and waves, he stopped suddenly, numbed at what he saw. Twelve miles north by north-east was the dim outline of a cruiser, travelling at maximum speed toward the islands. To the west, and rounding the island on which he stood, sailed the *Emden*, gathering steam and speed. Her battle flags snapped in the wind, and von Mücke wept at the bitter disappointment of not being at the side of his commander when he was most needed. He stood there with the others, overwhelmed with distress and frustration. Before his eyes was to unfold a panorama of events which, for the remainder of his life, he would never be able to forget.

"He shouldn't fight. He should escape around the islands. He has neither enough steam up nor enough men to handle the guns and ammunition," he gasped, half sobbing, his words almost incoherent.

Von Mücke's opinions were, of course, unknown to von Müller, and it is doubtful they would have made any difference.

Von Müller was not one to decline an action, no matter what the odds, and he had known from the day he left Tsingtao, that sometime, somewhere, he was going to meet the enemy face to face. He had not come this far to run away. True, he was short of men and the great personal force of von Mücke, but he still had 296 officers and men on board, and they would have to do.

As the *Emden* cleared the barrier reef Gropius ordered the helmsman to make a turn to starboard, so that the course would be generally in a north north-east direction on a slightly converging course with that of the approaching cruiser which was heading south-west. Through the binoculars the scene was hazy in the brilliant white light of the sun, but the officers on the bridge believed that the intruder might be the British light cruiser, *Newcastle*. The anxiety that had gripped the bridge began to give way to the occasional chuckle and broad grin. All knew that the *Emden* was more than a match for the *Newcastle*. But von Müller, ever suspicious, was not so ready to agree that the enemy was a light cruiser. She seemed too fast for an old cruiser like *Newcastle*, and if she were one of the latest cruisers, he knew he was in for trouble. Asking for her range and her speed, he was told that she was much closer than he had anticipated, 14,500 yards, and her speed was estimated at approximately 25 knots.

"Then she is not the *Newcastle*," von Müller said grimly. He called through the voice pipe to ask the *Emden*'s speed, and was informed she was travelling at only 20 knots. He called for more steam, sending two of his officers to the boiler rooms to speed up the work and to determine the cause of the delay. He had no sooner done so than he perceived that the enemy was turning slightly to starboard. This permitted a better glimpse of her silhouette. She looked like a heavy cruiser, but her smoke and the heavy swells created by the 12-knot wind made her identification difficult.

The time, according to the *Emden*'s log, was 9.32 a.m. Glossop in *Sydney* wirelessed the *Melbourne* that the enemy was in sight.

Von Müller again called for the range and was informed by Zimmermann that it was 10,300 yards. He ordered the range

called every minute, on the minute, being assured by Gaede at the same time that all guns and tubes were loaded and at the ready. The enemy was some six miles away, hull down with her masts and upper structure visible from time to time as she crested the long swells. The range was called at 10,000 yards and a short time later at 9,800 yards, and von Müller decided that it was now time to open the action. "Commence firing," he snapped into the voice pipe. The electric firing button to the forward guns was pressed home and the *Emden* belched fire and smoke from her forward guns. Shells arced through the blue of the sky. The *Emden* turned to bring her broadside to bear, and a full salvo of five shells weighing 34 pounds apiece slammed toward the distant cruiser. With binoculars glued to their eyes, the *Emden*'s officers instantly perceived the shells were 400 yards beyond their target by the five geysers of water that spouted like a shimmering fountain into the air.

Captain Glossop saw the distant flash of fire and knew that his adversary had started the engagement. But he waited, perhaps believing the range too great to be accurate. When he saw the shells burst aft of the *Sydney* he was duly alarmed, and called for a change of course, ten points to starboard. The cruiser started her turn to the more easterly course, to increase her distance from the enemy, and Glossop wirelessed the *Melbourne* in code that the enemy had opened fire.

On the *Emden*, von Müller, and several officers who had been with him on the bridge, scrambled below to the protection of the conning tower. He would now direct the progress of the engagement from the narrow slits in the tower's armoured shield. Having noted that the first salvo had dropped harmlessly beyond the now-turning enemy, the range was re-established quickly, and the second salvo screamed north-eastward, the smoke of the cordite mushrooming upward into the conning tower area, choking the forward lookouts. This salvo was 200 yards short, but in a flash the third was on its way, as shells were passed quickly and expertly up the ammunition hoists to the third loaders, second loaders, first loaders and thence into the guns, to be fired by the central fire-control officers. Geysers from its landing spouted up directly in front of the enemy, who was now twisting and turning in an effort to escape,

and who had not yet fired a single shot in return. Getting out of the range of the *Emden* was Glossop's primary concern. He was now facing north-east, and moving at maximum speed, churning up a huge bow-wave and sending ugly clouds of smoke over the port-side.

Eight seconds later another salvo belched skyward and the little *Emden* shook violently as the shells screamed toward the *Sydney*.

The *Sydney* was hit, and she reeled from the impact. The *Emden*'s shells had been laid squarely along her starboard side amidships, and her Number Two gun had been silenced. One sailor was mutilated by the blast, and six others badly wounded but saved from death by the armour plate of the Number Two position.

Glossop and Finlayson were on the bridge, a bridge that was made of canvas stretched vertically over the steel posts and then backed up by sandbags — a poor arrangement for protection. Shrapnel from the *Emden* salvo sprayed the area and rattled against the conning tower like buckshot. Miraculously no one on the bridge was injured. Meanwhile, on the main deck of the *Sydney*, Lt. Garsia was busy hurrying along his loaders from the ammunition lifts to the Number One port and starboard guns, and he slithered to the deck behind a shield when he heard the shells screaming toward him. He escaped injury, shook his head to clear his numbed ears, and reached the port gun in time to hear the first position port gun chief, Peter Atkins, shout: "Shall I load, sir?"

Garsia could scarcely believe his ears. "Haven't you loaded yet?" he shouted incredulously. Atkins replied that he had not yet received the order to load, which caused Garsia to remark: "I wonder what the hell's the matter up there," referring to activity in the conning tower. He told Atkins to load, and raced to check the other forward guns, but found them loaded. Apparently there had been a breakdown in communications between fire-control and the port-side forward gun's crew. Still Glossop did not give the order to commence firing. Although he gives no reason for this delay in his dispatches, nor can any reason be found in the diaries of the officers, it can only be presumed that the rapidly-turning *Sydney*, bucking the

south winds and the heavy swells, found it difficult to establish the range. There seems no other explanation for the critical delay.

But as fate would have it, the rangefinder of the *Sydney* would never be used in the engagement. The next salvo from the *Emden* caught the *Sydney* amidships and destroyed the entire range-finding apparatus, killing the crew and further checking the *Sydney*'s ability to answer the *Emden*'s challenge. Several valuable minutes were lost while a portable rangefinder was established on the exposed bridge. (There was no other place to observe the distant enemy, often lost behind the swells with only her masts visible.) The *Emden*'s fourth funnel was still in place, and this contributed to the mystery of her identity at this time. (This funnel may well have slowed down her speed at the very time she needed all the speed she could muster, if she were to out-race and out-manoeuvre the more powerful *Sydney*.)

Finally, at 9.39 a.m. Glossop gave the long-awaited order to commence firing, and the first salvo from the 6-inch guns, each capable of hurling a 100-pound shell some 10,000 yards to within a 66-yard circle, roared skyward. The gunners were able to watch them leave the muzzles and arc upward, turning red from the friction of their speed and then disappearing into the blue before arcing downward toward the twisting and turning target. Each broadside of the *Sydney* could slam 500 pounds of high-explosives at intervals of six seconds. Also, since her guns were three times more powerful than those of the *Emden*, the *Sydney* could keep out of enemy range and pound her unmercifully as long as she could keep up her steam, while the *Emden* remained hampered by the lack of full steam in her boilers. Under normal circumstances, with both vessels under a full head of steam, the *Emden* could easily out-race *Sydney*. But not today.

Glossop knew that he had made a dangerous mistake by venturing too close to the *Emden*'s guns. The sudden appearance of the enemy from the Cocos Lagoon had caught him unawares, because he had supposed that the smoke of the Direction Island fires was from a ship in the lagoon. Even then, he could have made a sharp turn from his south-westerly course, to study the

enemy and try to ascertain her identity. Some naval observers believe that Glossop took it for granted the *Emden* was the *Königsberg* and closed in for the kill. As a result, he received a severe battering during the opening rounds that crippled his initial shelling accuracy. But Glossop had no intention of being caught napping again, and the *Sydney* veered sharply to the west and then to the north-west, away from the *Emden*.

Aboard the *Emden*, the officers noted with alarm that the *Sydney*'s opening salvo had plummeted into the water, raising huge fountains, almost a mile beyond their cruiser: it was a clear indication that the Australian guns were much more powerful than theirs. Quickly weighing the dangerous situation, his steam down, his speed no more than 22 knots and his guns outclassed, he decided on a bold move, a move not unexpected from a man like this. Von Müller decided to try and close the *Sydney* and deliver a quick knock-out punch with shells and torpedoes. If he could out-manoeuvre the Australians, whose gunners so far had proved inferior to the Germans, he might be able to accomplish his objective. It would subject the *Emden* to a rain of fire, but it was his only chance to sink the enemy, and sink her he must.

Turning to lengthen the distance between the two, Glossop now exposed only the stern of *Sydney* to the Germans. He was, therefore, unable to use his full broadside or any of his powerful forward guns until such time as he could race out of range. The *Emden* turned to port, and briefly to a west north-west course, to bring the starboard broadside to bear, and once more the little cruiser shook as the shells screamed toward the *Sydney*, some six miles away. The aim was deadly. This salvo hit just aft of the armoured conning tower. The forward funnel was blown overboard, and several men were cut down at the port-side forward gun. One shell managed to pierce the armour plate of the conning tower, and it hissed to a red-hot stop without exploding. The concussion knocked the officers and crew to the steel floor, but they miraculously escaped injury. Of the dud shell, Glossop remarked: "Bloody good show; the Lord's on our side."

The *Sydney*'s exposed deck was now a dangerous area to the medical assistants, who crawled through the smoke and the

choking cordite haze to bring the wounded sailors to the sick bay below. Their ears were unprotected against the tremendous noise of the booming guns, and each man would race from an exit holding his ears until he reached a wounded man, usually rolling on the pitching deck. Then he would grab the wounded sailor by the arms and haul him to the safety of the ship's ladder, and thence to the sick bay, almost amidships and two decks below. Several of these brave orderlies were blown into the sea, sometimes with the wounded they were half-carrying, half-pulling to shelter. All the while the incessant pounding of the guns continued, broken only by the slamming of the breeches and the explosion of enemy shells.

In the conning tower of the *Sydney*, a quick-thinking petty officer wrapped the unexploded but still red-hot shell of the *Emden* in a piece of canvas, and running out hurled it over the side with the dexterity of a sling-shot champion. For this deed Glossop rewarded him with an extra tot of rum each day for the next two weeks. Since the only thing worth looking forward to each day in the routine monotony of shipboard life was the daily ration of the King's good rum, the reward was more welcome than any medal or mention in dispatches. Meanwhile, the guns were bellowing from the after positions at the almost imperceptible bow of the *Emden*, now turning broadside to fire her guns, and then racing forward in an attempt to close in upon the *Sydney* at the range where her torpedoes would be most effective. So far the *Emden* had not been touched by the enemy shells, as the Australian gunnery was wildly erratic because of the heavy swells and the loss of the rangefinder.

The *Emden*'s guns were working splendidly, round after round, every eight seconds approximately for the forward gun, and twenty seconds for the sides, as she twisted along her course to provide the slimmest target to the *Sydney*. But the shells were not finding their mark as often now, since the *Sydney* was increasing her distance, her 26 knots pulling her to safety. Then another salvo from the *Emden* blanketed *Sydney*'s foredeck, killing one member of an exposed gun's crew, and critically wounding two others. The same salvo tore away the armoured gun shield of the forward starboard gun with an ear-splitting wrench of steel.

At 9.58 a.m. *Sydney* wirelessly *Melbourne*: AM ENGAGING ENEMY . . . CHASING NORTH. It was a strange signal to say the least, as it would have been hard to tell who was chasing whom at that moment.

Lieutenant Garsia recalled this incident:

There was a lot of "whee-ooo, whee-ooo," as well as the "but but but of the shells striking the water beyond. . . . Coming aft, I heard the shot that hit the gunshield. A petty officer came limping past me from aft and said that he had just carried an officer below . . . and that the after-control position had been knocked right out and everyone wounded . . . they were marvellously lucky.

I told him that if he was really able to carry on, to go aft to Number Two starboard and see there was no fire, and if there was that any charges about were to be thrown overboard at once. He was very game, and limped away aft. He got aft to find a very bad cordite fire just starting. He, with others, got this put out. I later noticed some smoke rising aft and ran aft to find it was just the remains of what they had put out, but I found three men, one with a badly wounded foot, sitting on the gun platform, and a petty officer, lying on the deck a little further aft, with a nasty wound in his back. I found one of the men was unwounded but badly shaken. However, he pulled himself together when I spoke to him, and told him I wanted him to do what he could for the wounded. I then ran back to my own group. . . . I was quite deaf by this time.

The cordite fire flared up again and was finally put out by a bucket brigade of sailors using pails of sand to smother the flames which the water could not subdue.

This blaze had grown in intensity as broken bags of cordite quickly caught fire. When the flames began to mount above the superstructure they were visible from the deck of the *Emden*, where a great cheer broke out amid the din of the cannonading. Von Müller remained grim. He needed more steam, and he was noting that at her relatively low speed the *Emden* was not recovering in the swells after each salvo, while the enemy, with

her greater tonnage, was getting her salvos away quicker now. Although the aiming was erratic he knew that soon she would have the range. The shells of the *Emden* continued to fall within the target area, and one shell fell in the boys' mess where the cadets would normally have been, had not Glossop sent them to duty in the sick bay. The cadets had been assisting the busy medics and orderlies during the engagement thus far, some of them having risked their necks to crawl out on the decks under fire to rescue injured men.

"Look at those kids," yelled one of the gun-loaders. "They're magnificent; they don't bat an eye."

The cannonading echoed and re-echoed across the waves. The high shrill of the shells mingled with the bright flashes of the guns and the belches of black ugly smoke. So far the *Emden* had not been hit; only the *Sydney* had suffered. But all this was to change quickly as Glossop rapidly moved his cruiser beyond the range of the German guns. Little by little now the *Emden's* guns were reaching their highest elevation.

Von Müller knew all too well the consequences of allowing *Sydney* to move beyond his range. He sent officers from the conning tower to the boiler rooms to impress on the engineers and sweating stokers that the *Emden* must get more steam up in order to meet the challenge of the enemy. The heat in the boiler rooms was almost unbearable as more than 140 men, stripped to their undershorts, heaved shovel after shovel into the roaring flames, all the while cursing the heat and the choking dust that swirled around them. They could see nothing of the battle and could only know that it was in progress by the steady firing of the guns and the shaking from the recoils. By 10.12 a.m. the steam was beginning to rise slowly and the *Emden* raised her speed to 24 knots. It was good, but it was not good enough for von Müller to out-manoeuvre the enemy, now turning away from him in a north north-easterly direction, along the same line that she had first approached the islands. The crew thought that the enemy had given up the fight, and another cheer went up.

Someone cried "We're winning . . . we're winning," and all of a sudden the hard work and the endless days at sea seemed worthwhile. Even von Müller was elated, though puzzled, to

see the enemy take such a wide turn and head north north-east. He kept the *Emden* on a north-west course, not caring to follow or attempt to close the distance at this moment. It was a game of watching, a game of trying to ascertain what the enemy was up to. No British naval captain ever walked away from a fight, and von Müller knew it.

Glossop turned the *Sydney* due east in a further attempt to get out of range. Then, after a run of five miles he turned slightly south-east, while the *Emden* now changed to an easterly course in an attempt to close in and fire a torpedo. Glossop now swung in a tight circle so that the *Sydney* was facing west and north-west. Von Müller pulled the *Emden* into a tight turn, also in the same clockwise direction, and fired his guns which fell short. The range was almost six miles, placing Glossop in a position to open his port broadsides, and he did so. The first salvo fell short, but the next salvo of high-velocity shells struck the main deck of the *Emden* with devastating results. Amoured gunshields wilted from the blast. The main port-side ammunition hoist was demolished. A dozen gunners died and their bodies rolled along the decks. Shells rolled with them, and bags of cordite were smashed open by the guns.

Von Müller quickly changed course to a westerly direction, and the *Sydney* changed to parallel his course six miles to the north north-east. The *Emden* was worked up to 25 knots, but *Sydney* kept her distance and her speed, and now she had the range. The *Emden* twisted and turned. Glossop knew the tide of battle would favour him now and he signalled *Melbourne* that he was now pursuing the enemy. The excitement on *Melbourne* had reached a terrific peak as crewmen gathered at the signals room awaiting word on the progress of the engagement. Glossop was not a man to keep them waiting or uninformed.

Wham . . . wham . . . wham! The guns of the *Sydney* belched their messages of doom and the exploding shells blanketed the *Emden* in patterns of blood, thundering down upon the exposed ammunition carriers while the gunners huddled behind the armour of the babettes and the gun shields. One shell struck the wireless room, wiping out the crew and reducing the wireless operation centre to unrecognizable junk.

Blown to smithereens were the faithful telegraphers who had devoted themselves day and night to the service of their little cruiser: men like Bieber, Ehlers, Wille, and Huster.

But despite the fact that the *Sydney* had found the range and was using her great speed and manoeuvrability to the best advantage, von Müller continued to hope; he was looking for some chance to get the enemy with torpedoes, and he watched every move like a cat watching a running mouse. But *Sydney*'s shells were coming faster now, and all of them fell within the target area as Glossop dogged his enemy, matching every twist and turn, and keeping out of range. Gropius continued to call the turn signals, while the helmsman, Monkediek, spun the wheel, and the range officer called the range to the guns which were still being fired from the central fire-control amidships. But now a lucky salvo laid a pattern of high explosives across the *Emden* amidships, and the central fire-control and the main rangefinder were obliterated, together with their crew. Another salvo smeared the decks, hurling shrapnel and bits of steel and chain-like grape-shot, and wiping out exposed signallers Bauke, Grawe, Linning, Rieger, and Moeller.

Bodies now rolled on the exposed decks like barrels broken loose in a storm. It was almost suicide to attempt to retrieve them, or to rescue the wounded, as the *Sydney* continued to pound the *Emden*. Von Müller pressed onward, trying desperately to find a weak spot in Glossop's manoeuvring. Then another broadside across the forecastle wiped out the crew of Number One gun on the foredeck, immediately in front of the conning tower. Von Müller was now critically handicapped by the lack of the trained men whom he had abandoned on Direction Island. He also missed the able leadership of von Mücke, still watching the battle from the north side of the island. A lone shell from the *Sydney* ploughed into the port-side ahead of the tower and killed several ammunition carriers huddled beside the armoured charthouse. Now there were live shells rolling along the decks, shells that could bowl a man overboard if he were caught in their path.

The sun, brilliant in its eastern climb, had now become unmerciful, not only to those on deck swathed in smoke and the burning fumes of cordite, but also to the men working below

in the crowded ammunition flats, in the magazine, the sick bays, and particularly in the boiler room – where the heat and dust fumes were unbearable. Here the sound of the shells striking the decks and sides was deafening, and the sweating stokers and engineers worked in fear, waiting for that awful moment when a shell would pierce the skin of the cruiser and blow them into eternity. They would not have long to wait.

Von Müller sent Leutnant Erich Fikentscher to set up a portable rangefinder on the exposed bridge. He ordered Leutnant Fritz Zimmermann to supervise the carrying of the ammunition, now bogged down by a damaged ammunition hoist and the death of the port-side carriers. The guns had begun to slow down, but under Zimmermann's leadership the diminished crews, with the help of stokers, rushed to the deck and started the forward guns working again at approximately eight rounds a minute. Orders to the guns now had to be shouted through voice tubes, and in the din of exploding shells and roaring guns many of the orders became mixed up or lost, and von Müller had to rely more and more on the observations of the exposed lookouts who called down the locations where the *Emden* shells were falling. It was a tough job, aggravated by the heavy smoke which occasionally obscured the crows-nests and the soot-encrusted crews.

When von Guérard suggested to von Müller that the look-outs be brought down for deck duty, von Müller replied snappily that it was better they should breathe smoke than salt water.

The time was now 10.30 and the ships were 10,500 yards apart travelling north-west on somewhat divergent courses, with the *Sydney* turning slightly to a north by north-west heading, to make sure she was well beyond the German's range of fire. Glossop was jubilant. He had found the range, and his guns were working furiously and accurately. Glossop changed his course suddenly for several minutes and loosed a torpedo. The silver fish zipped through the blue water leaving a feathery wake of rainbow bubbles, but the range was too great and it expired 300 yards short of the target.

Glossop was disappointed. He had hoped this torpedo would end the engagement. He again wirelessed *Melbourne* that he was engaging the enemy briskly, and then called for a

casualty report. There were thirteen men dead, one dying, four others critically wounded, and eight others seriously wounded, but it appeared that they would live.

Calm seas were needed to get the longest range from the guns, but heavy swells of the Indian Ocean were handicapping the *Emden* now, while the *Sydney*, with its longer range, continued her pounding. The next shells from the *Sydney* swept the *Emden's* afterdeck. Two shells exploded against the armoured shield of the stern starboard gun, setting fire to bags of cordite strewn on the deck. Sailors instantly kicked live shells into the sea as the fire roared into the ammunition. Von Müller left the protection of the conning tower during this rain of shells, and rushed aft to take charge of the fire fighting. On the way he shouted encouragement to his sailors. A bucket brigade was formed to fight the fire with sand and water. Von Müller went below and was sickened at the number of men dead and wounded in the sick bay and lying in the corridors, in the hot, breathless atmosphere between the decks. He returned to the conning tower through the hail of fire unscathed.

But the fire at the stern was mounting, blanketing much of the cruiser with creamy acrid smoke. It was visible aboard the *Sydney* and was to cause Glossop to make a serious error. The lookouts saw the fire and then perceived that the *Emden* was swathed in smoke, because the south wind was carrying the smoke over her upper structure.

Lt. Garsia recalls that he was in charge of running ammunition to the forward guns, and had worked his way aft to ascertain why there had been a slow-up when he heard the gun crew of the port-side fore-gun jumping up and down, yelling and waving their hats in the air. And he asked what had happened.

“She’s gone, sir, she’s gone,” they shouted.

Garsia ran to the port rail, but he could see no sign of the enemy. He shouted for his port gun crews to stand by the *Sydney's* port lifeboats, remarking: “There will be many men in the water.”

On the bridge, Glossop and the others also saw a huge mushroom of black- and yellow-coloured smoke on the water. The combination of the strong south wind carrying the smoke

of the *Emden*'s fires over her decks and masts, together with the mirage of the horizon and the brilliant reflections of the sun in the troughs, led Glossop and the *Sydney* crew to think the *Emden* had gone down. Glossop changed course to rescue the survivors, while the crew celebrated on deck by jumping and dancing and singing *Rule Britannia*.

But the *Emden* was still very much alive, and as her fires began to cool on her decks, she was again exposed, her guns working furiously. Glossop screamed for hard a-starboard. He had almost stumbled into the *Emden*'s range, and had the fires on the *Emden* not been quelled at that moment, the naval engagement might have had a different ending. But as it was, the *Emden* was still beyond lethal range by a scant 1,000 yards. But this was enough, and Glossop made the most of it, hammering away, round after round.

Shell after shell ripped into the *Emden*, slicing up her armour plating like a can opener attacking a sardine can. First the foredeck was crumpled like tinfoil. Anchor chains and the two capstans were hurled about like grape, pounding sailors into unrecognizable scraps of flesh and uniform. Deckplates ruptured and heaved upwards as shells screamed into the *Emden*'s sides and exploded beneath the decks with ear-shattering violence. Two shells penetrated the plates below the waterline amidships, and sea water rushed into the engine room. Stokers were working in water up to their knees, and the continued rise increased the danger of a boiler-room explosion. Smoke filled the torpedo flat. The guns were slowing down as there were not enough men to handle them. Von Müller was everywhere at once now, like a madman, trying to save his ship. Aiming of the sporadic firing was now almost exclusively dependent on the eye of the lookouts in the crows-nests. Smoke spewed from the ladder wells making it impossible to carry the ammunition to the decks now that the hoists had been damaged.

But the *Emden*'s ordeal by fire had only just begun. It was unbelievable that a light cruiser could withstand such punishment. The next blow was critical. A shell struck the conning tower and pierced the armour plate on the starboard corner, knocking out the helm telegraph and the entire steering

mechanism. This meant the *Emden* could no longer be steered from up forward; steering would have to be accomplished by the alternate speeding up and slowing down of the ship's screws. Two helmsmen were sent aft to get the emergency stern helm in order. To compound the critical situation, the guns were out of ammunition at this time.

Then a shell from the *Sydney* pierced the starboard rear quarter of the conning tower, while two more burst directly above it with devastating results. The entire bridge shivered and collapsed over the top of the conning tower. The armour plate peeled off like a ripe orange, and the heavy plate-glass in the starboard window slits dissolved into a million fragments. Gaede fell screaming to the floor, his face a mass of pulp. Witthoeft, at the torpedo-room telegraph, lost part of his jaw, and he collapsed beside the dying Gaede. Seaman Tietz, standing by the engine room telegraph, died instantly. Mechanic apprentice Hartmann, who had been working on the electric gunnery button, screamed and then lay silent.

Miraculously, von Müller escaped injury. So did Gropius, who was on the ladder between the conning tower and the charthouse when the explosion occurred. Von Müller shouted into the voice pipe to the engine room. "Get me six men up here on the double, and bring a litter." He bent down over Witthoeft and wiped his brow with a wet cloth. "You'll be all right Robert, you'll be all right. We'll get you to sick bay in a moment."

Another pattern of shells exploded on the amidships decks, aft of the conning tower, and near where the wireless room had been before it was obliterated. They pierced the armour plating, and steam pipes burst below the main deck, scalding the newly-recruited ammunition carriers.

Von Müller was hurled against the steel plates of the conning tower. Von Guérard, coming up the ladder from below, was knocked down into the arms of the first-aid crew summoned by von Müller. The engine room reported that the port engines were failing because of the damage to the steam pipes. As engineers rushed to make repairs, steering by the screws collapsed. There was insufficient power in the port engine to keep the cruiser on course. Von Müller ordered Gropius to

make his way to the stern and find out why the after steering had not yet started. Ever the von Müller, he remarked, "When the war's over, you and I will hang the man who designed the after steering gear."

Gropius just grinned, left the conning tower, scrambled down the ladder, and started back along the main deck. He kept to the port side, between the two port lifeboats and the funnels, climbed to the afterdeck, and reached the stern steering position. He recoiled in horror. The entire four-man crew had been pulverized by a shell. The huge steering-wheel stood unscathed, but the chains leading downward had been broken, and the rudder had been hit.

Gropius sent a gunner for help, and he returned in several minutes with two mechanics and six men from the engine room. They had just begun to work on the steering column when another pattern of shells laced the forecastle with thunderous explosions. The armoured deck heaved like a live thing, buckled and twisted into new shapes by the ordeal. One of the shells struck the conning tower with an ear-splitting blast.

Von Müller was hit. He fell to the floor, blood oozing from his forehead and from his shoulders.

Another cascade of shells fell across the after section, most of them luckily plunging harmlessly into the water. But one exploded near the after gun and cut down five of the men exposed at the stern helm. Gropius escaped serious injury as did one seaman. A call for more men went out, and five signal-men rushed to the great wheel in an attempt to get it moving. While they were struggling with it the cordite caught fire at Number Four gun, and three shells beside it exploded, killing the entire crew. Two ammunition carriers were also killed.

Working like madmen in the heat below decks, the engineers and plumbers were at last able to patch up the broken steam pipes and restore power to the port engines. By calling through the twisted voice pipes, von Müller was able to effect a certain amount of control over the *Emden* and keep her heading fairly accurate. Gropius, at the stern, felt the increased churning of the engines, felt the ship respond to the controls, and started forward for the conning tower. On the way he ordered the remaining gun crew at Number Five to accompany him, as the

port fore-gun needed attention. A shell exploded as this group hit the twisted deck. It blew all of them into the sea, and their plunge was marked by bloody froth and the rush of the Indian Ocean sharks.

Thus died Kapitänleutnant Hans Gropius, the faithful navigator, whose meticulous plotting had carried the *Emden* safely through some of the worst water hazards known to the modern mariner. The same salvo of shells that obliterated Gropius and his emergency gun crew knocked down the forward funnel, and it collapsed into the deck like an expiring snake. The voice pipes leading from the conning tower to the engine room and to the torpedo flats were smashed beyond repair.

Von Müller had no longer any method of steering the *Emden* from the conning tower. The shells were coming in greater numbers, and smoke was pouring up from below. The *Emden* was in grave danger. Some commanders might have surrendered at this point.

It was now 11.00 a.m.

Emden had lost headway and direction. She had veered from her north-westward course to a westward course, and von Müller was shouting himself hoarse, through the din of the cannonading, trying to get his cruiser to respond to his needs. The *Sydney* was still paralleling the *Emden*'s course, erratic as it was, keeping up a merciless and accurate shelling of the little cruiser.

Von Müller had been stubbornly clinging to the hope that the enemy would make one slip, and he would be able to hurl a torpedo at him, or loose a torrent of crippling salvos. But now he knew he could not hope to win. The torpedo flat was afire. Only one gun was working effectively, and the two remaining funnels of the *Emden* were blown to the main deck. Smoke poured across the deck, cutting visibility and choking the sailors who were attempting to carry on their duties.

Albert von Guérard was instantly killed as he directed von Müller's signals from the broken conning tower to the men at the skylights. The foremast shivered as the shrapnel tore it to splinters. It fell slowly at first and then bounced off the deck into the sea, carrying the two men in the crows-nest with

it. A sailor named Werner braved the shell-fire a dozen times as he ran from the conning tower back to the engine-room skylights, shouting down the changes of course, as von Müller fought to save his ship. Each time Werner ran aft, jumping over the twisted obstacles of steel, over the decks made unbearably hot by the fire now raging out of control below, over the dead and wounded, dodging over the rolling shells, and leaping over fragments of tortured steel plates, he moved through this nightmare of death without sustaining a scratch.

By now, the shell-fire had damaged both boilers. It was amazing that the *Emden* was moving at all, incredible that she was still afloat. But her men fought like demons to stop the internal fires from reaching the magazines, and the first-aid crew braved the hail of shells to rescue the wounded. At the moment the *Emden*'s engines could transmit only 115 revolutions per minute through the shafts. Because the funnels had been shot away, the furnace doors had to be propped open to avoid the danger of backdraughts, and this slowed the speed and made working in the boiler room intolerable. The heat and the fumes were indescribable. But still the sailors worked and fought, confident that von Müller would find the way to save them all.

The brave *Emden* had a score of fires blazing below her main deck, most of them caused by shell explosions near the heaps of cordite bags, stored by the ladders that led upwards to the vicinity of the guns. On deck, the woven hempen matting which von Müller had had strung between the funnels to trap wood splinters from damaged lifeboats, caught fire and showered the mid-section crews with flaming particles of rope. Lieutenant Hohenzollern fought his way through the flames in the torpedo flats to the first deck, and thence to the shambles of the main deck and crawled to the battered conning tower, where von Müller, with three ratings, was attempting to keep the *Emden* in operating condition. He informed his commander that the torpedo flats had been abandoned and that the torpedoes had been rolled overboard. "We can no longer hold the fires aft," said the Kaiser's nephew.

"*Mein Gott, das ende ist da,*" sobbed von Müller. "There is only one course open to me now, and I must take it."

He ran to the skylight and yelled for more steam. "Mehr

Dampf, mehr Dampf," he shouted. An engineer climbed up the ladder to the skylight and shouted to the commander that he could not get up more steam with the doors of the furnaces open. Von Müller yelled back. "Shut those doors. Our lives depend on it."

The *Emden* was heading slowly but surely toward the barrier reef of North Keeling Island, lying dead ahead. Glossop saw the island of palms ahead of the *Emden*, and he instantly guessed that von Müller was up to some trick. "The enemy is trying to get that island between us," he snapped. "Change course 90 degrees to port."

The cruiser *Sydney* was a beautiful picture of strength and grace as she arced 90 degrees, her bow-wave coiling upwards and sideways from the prow, and her wake describing a perfect circle of water. She was moving at 26 knots, and Glossop was hoping to close the 7,500 yards which were now between him and the *Emden*. Not knowing the terrible conditions aboard the enemy cruiser, he was thinking that the *Emden* could get around the island and circle around and around it, waiting for the chance to trick him with a torpedo. He was furious that he had not guessed the purpose of her direction earlier, and he snapped at his officers as he attempted to get more from his ship and his guns. At this point he could fire only his fore-gun and his port Number One.

Closer and closer plunged the dying *Emden* toward the furious line of breakers. Von Müller stood by the skylight, urging her on to her destruction.

The *Sydney* was gaining, but it was apparent now that she would not be in time. Glossop could now see that his enemy was heading for the reef.

Von Müller watched as if transfixed as the line of breakers disappeared from his sight beneath the *Emden*'s foredeck, and he braced himself for the collision. "Hold on," he shouted, and those within the sound of his shouts braced themselves as the *Emden* inched closer.

"Stop engines," he shouted through the skylight.

The engines were thrown into reverse and the *Emden* slowed appreciably. Then she struck the reef with a ripping sound and the squeal of tortured steel on the coral rock.

"*Voll Dampf!*" von Müller shouted, and the engines responded.

The *Emden* lurched further over the reef with a sickening crunch, impaling herself for eternity.

Glossop cursed. He had so wanted to sink the enemy. He swung the *Sydney* southward, and then east and north, to bypass North Keeling Island on the east side. He knew the *Emden* was done for, and he had decided to pursue the collier which he had noticed while *en route* to the Cocos two hours earlier. He would return to the *Emden* later.

And even at this moment he still did not know the identity of the ship he had been fighting. "Enemy beached herself to save sinking," he wirelessed to *Melbourne*. Then he ordered two salvos to be fired at the helpless cruiser, and noted with satisfaction that her fires had mounted higher.

Indeed, they had. The whole ship was afire.

Working like a madman with the sailors from below, von Müller, and the one or two officers who were left unscathed, carried and dragged the wounded to the temporary safety of the foredeck. He tore at steel and twisted hardware to rescue his trapped men, leading the rescuers into infernos to save his beloved sailors' lives.

The deckplates amidships and aft glowed red from the fires below. One detail of twenty men soaked down the magazines. Stokers joined engineers to flood the engine rooms. Emergency pumps kept slim streams of water flowing on the decks, causing heavy clouds of steam, through which the exhausted rescuers worked. Every man was a hero, his job compounded by the awful heat of the noon sun.

Von Müller commanded all those who could swim to jump overboard and save themselves. Many drowned in the furious breakers; others became victims of the sharks. Not one reached the sandy shoreline, so close beyond the tranquil waters of the shark-infested lagoon. The *Emden* was now a burning hulk. Her back was breaking under the pounding of the surging swells. All her fight was gone.

Yet, unbelievable as it might seem, the worst was yet to come.

Glossop was soon to indulge in actions which were to cloak

his well-fought victory in everlasting shame, but in the meantime he radioed the *Melbourne* at 11.30 a.m.: AM PURSUING HER MERCHANT COLLIER.

To the distant *Minotaur* he wirelessed the good news: ENEMY BEACHED AND DONE FOR.

The Bloody Conclusion

Captain Glossop was satisfied with his morning's work and he made his rounds of the *Sydney*, thanking his men for the fine job, particularly the trainees who had provided much-needed assistance to the medical orderlies and to the ammunition carriers below decks. A survey of the cruiser disclosed she had been holed in three places; the after-control platform was a mass of gaping holes and twisted iron, the rangefinder was demolished, and a number of bad hits had been made on the gun shields and other parts of the exposed upper structure. The shell that had failed to explode in the conning tower was one of the more fortunate episodes of the engagement. The other was the explosion of the shell in the boys' mess deck when there was no one in the vicinity. Apart from ruining a large stock of clothing, this explosion provided the boys with a fine stock of souvenirs.

After his inspection, Glossop returned to the bridge to take charge of the *Sydney*'s pursuit of the *Buresk*, visible north northwest by her masts and smoke. At full speed, Glossop was able to hoist signal flags at 11.53 a.m. ordering the collier to "stop engines."

Whether Kapitänleutnant Kloepper received the flag signal is not known. In any event, he didn't stop the collier, hoping to outdistance the cruiser that was pursuing him. He had witnessed the battle between the two ships, and when he saw the *Emden* had beached on North Keeling Island, he immediately called for full speed and all the steam that could be mustered. He cursed himself for remaining so close to the battle

scene, but he explained later that the "invincibility" of the *Emden* may have made him over-confident.

But Kloepper's judgement, since taking command of the *Buresk*, had been consistently poor. His failure to repair the ship's transmitter was proof of a dangerously negligent attitude. There are many possible explanations for his behaviour. He had been irritated by von Müller's sarcasm in their final exchange regarding radio signals. And it is also likely that he was already feeling resentful because von Müller had placed him in charge of a lowly collier, when he was the *Emden*'s navigation specialist, with a rank equal to that of von Mücke, Gropius, and Gaede. Furthermore, Kloepper had been "pressed" into returning to service after his retirement. He had been complaining about this from the day the *Emden* had sailed from Tsingtao. The collier assignment may well have been the last straw.

It is hard to resist speculating just how great a part Kloepper's negligence played in the death of the *Emden*. If he had made the necessary transmitter repairs on that fateful night, there is every reason to believe he would have been able to alert the *Emden* to the fact that a warship was travelling toward the Cocos, which would have given von Müller time to get up steam and recall his landing party. Admittedly, the *Emden* could not have continued her raiding and her fantastic run of luck for ever. Nevertheless, she might have defeated the *Sydney* by trickery and gone on to commit many further raids before her career ended. But this is sheer conjecture.

As matters stood, Kloepper's carelessness was also to lead to the loss of his own ship. During those darkened hours of November 8 and November 9 he had made another serious error, this time in seamanship. He took no interest in where the *Buresk* was heading, despite the fact that von Müller had instructed him not to stray more than fifteen miles from North Keeling Island, so that if signalled, the *Buresk* could be at the *Emden*'s side in the Cocos lagoon in exactly one hour. Kloepper made no "fixes" on his position, and as a navigation specialist he should have known what to expect in this part of the Indian Ocean.

During the night the ocean currents carried the *Buresk* some thirty-two miles north of North Keeling. This would

necessitate a run of more than two hours under forced draught to reach the Cocos. It meant that the *Buresk*'s smoke could not be seen by the *Emden* that morning. Had she been steaming where she was supposed to be, the presence of her smoke cloud as well as that of the approaching *Sydney* could have warned von Müller of his danger. Also, if she had been where she was ordered to be, she could have acted as a decoy for the *Emden*, and a trap might have been set for the enemy. Then, to compound the situation, when he noticed the approach of the enemy he should have run westward, zig-zagged out of sight, and escaped the *Sydney*, having a good three to four hours to steam away. Then, if the *Emden* should be victorious, she could be recalled to coal her or meet her somewhere in the vastness of the ocean.

Now Kloepper was being pursued, and he knew there was little chance of escape. Still, he screamed at his officers and cursed his Chinese crew, threatening they would all be hanged if the enemy caught them. But 18 knots was no match for the on-coming *Sydney*. A shell across the *Buresk*'s bow brought Kloepper to his senses. He saw the *Sydney*'s signal flags: STRIKE YOUR COLOURS, and he ordered the engines into reverse. It was 12.00 p.m.

Kloepper at once called all his officers to the bridge and assigned jobs to each one of them. All the code books, the ship's log, and all arms and ammunition were to be thrown overboard. The wireless room was to be totally demolished by axes. The Kingston valves in the lower hold were to be opened and smashed, so that the sea water would flood the ship even though the fires had not been drawn and there would be danger of an explosion. The engineers believed they could reduce steam pressure in time to save an unwanted explosion and raced to their job. Kloepper called for the German ensign to be lowered and he personally wrapped it in a heavy wrench and tossed it overboard. Beer, champagne, and whisky from the mess was also consigned to the ocean.

At 12.24 p.m. the *Sydney* flag-signalled the *Buresk* to send over her boat. Kloepper did not answer, and Glossop ordered the *Sydney*'s steam pinnace lowered and an Australian boarding party under Lt. Bell-Salter moved to the *Buresk*. With drawn

revolver, the Australian officer took possession of the collier. It was then that he learned that the cruiser on the distant reef was the *Emden*, and he signalled the *Sydney* the good news. Then he felt the *Buresk* lurch beneath his feet, and at 12.40 he flagged Glossop that the *Buresk* was sinking.

CAN YOU SAVE THE SHIP? the *Sydney* signalled back, three minutes later. The reply came at 12.45: SHIP IS FILLING FAST. The following flag signal transmission took place.

12.50 p.m. *Sydney* to *Collier*: BRING OFF OUR OWN PEOPLE AND ENGLISH. TELL THEM TO MAN THEIR OWN BOATS.

Collier to *Sydney*: YES SOME ENGLISH PEOPLE THEY ARE MANNING BOATS. AM SENDING ALL CHINESE CREW.

12.53 p.m. *Sydney* to *Collier*: REPORT HOW SHE IS FILLING. CAN YOU DO NOTHING FOR IT?

Collier to *Sydney*: THEY HAVE OPENED VALVES AND DAMAGED THEM SO THEY CANNOT BE CLOSED.

12.55 p.m. *Collier* to *Sydney*: PLEASE SEND OVER ENGINEER OFFICER.

12.57 p.m. *Sydney* to *Collier*: SEND CUTTER BACK WITH SOME ONE WHO CAN GIVE US THE DETAILS.

1.08 p.m. *Collier* to *Sydney*: SHIP IS TAKING A LIST.

1.20 p.m. *Sydney* to *Collier*: ABANDON SHIP.

To say that Glossop was infuriated would be putting it mildly. To lose a ship filled with hard Welsh coal, and to lose all the code and log books, was going to be difficult to explain to the Australian Naval Board. To Finlayson he remarked: "Is there no way a good sailor can save a ship? How humiliating. And to think we had the chance to sink her earlier. Bring her officers to my quarters and keep the Chinese crew on the afterdeck. I understand there are one or two Englishmen among the crew and they are to be permitted to share the crew's quarters. Now see to it."

Glossop watched tight-lipped as the *Buresk* listed to port, with the rising waters up to her side-rail. Between the *Sydney*

and the dying ship were one cutter and two lifeboats packed with the officers and crew of the *Buresk* and the boarding party under Bell-Salter. As the cutters reached the side of the cruiser, all the occupants stood up and watched the *Buresk* sink. Her stern rose high into the air and her twin propellors stood starkly against the sky. Then she slipped noiselessly beneath the waves. Glossop then turned to one of his officers and suggested that the two lifeboats remain on the water to be towed with an Australian crew aboard as the *Sydney* made her way back to North Keeling. Glossop had noticed several men in the water between North Keeling and the *Buresk*, and he intended rescuing as many as possible.

Kloepper was questioned closely by Glossop and other naval officers, and he was more than willing to talk. He disclosed that the purpose of the *Emden*'s visit to the Cocos was the destruction of the wireless station and the submarine cables, and that a German raiding party under von Mücke was in the act of destruction when von Müller was forced to abandon them. Glossop felt better now. Here was a chance to capture von Mücke and his men, and he could take his time about it as the Germans were isolated on Direction Island, with no way of escaping. By the time he swept the seas near North Keeling for German sailors and then attended to the *Emden* the daylight hours would be gone, but he would give the German raiding party a surprise the next morning (November 10). He attempted to signal the Direction Island station, but could not get an answer.

At this point Kloepper, tired of the questioning, remarked there was one thing the British might as well learn now: von Müller would never surrender, and he probably was already scheming to escape from the wreck on North Keeling. Glossop laughed at this remark, and retorted that he had a way of making the enemy surrender. It was a remark he would recall for the rest of his life.

The *Sydney* was under way slowly now, towing the *Buresk*'s two boats. Two half-drowned sailors were scooped from the water after an hour's sweep. There were more, as Glossop knew, and he ordered the two boats cut loose to work through the area, and said he would pick them up in several hours' time.

He had some important business to attend to. He headed the *Sydney* towards North Keeling on his southern horizon, visible by the palms and the smoke of the burning *Emden*. He set a course to the windward side so as to cross the last course of the enemy as she headed for the coral breakwater. Promptly at 4.10 p.m., he crossed the burning *Emden*'s stern by 4,300 yards and signalled with flags: WILL YOU SURRENDER?

Naval authorities will argue that Glossop was correct in asking for this surrender, as the German Ensign was still flying, even though it seems like a ridiculous request, with the *Emden* broken on the coral, its hull ablaze from stem to stern. But Glossop was still bitter over the loss of the *Buresk*. WILL YOU SURRENDER the flags waved.

At 4.15 p.m., according to the log of the *Sydney*, the *Emden* is reported to have answered the flag signal with a Morse signal, apparently from an emergency sending set: WHAT SIGNAL? . . . NO SIGNAL BOOKS.

The *Sydney* then signalled the *Emden* by Morse at 4.20 p.m. with the following message: DO YOU SURRENDER? According to the cruiser's log this was not acknowledged. Five minutes later the *Sydney* signalled again: HAVE YOU RECEIVED MY SIGNAL? and again according to the log, no answer left the burning *Emden*.

Glossop swung the *Sydney* closer to the beached enemy and, still infuriated by the German Ensign visible from time to time through the smoke, he decided to cut it down himself, with shell-fire. Sharp at 4.30 p.m., he gave the command that was to tarnish his brilliant career. "Open fire," he ordered.

Sydney's guns roared, and shells descended on the *Emden* where the wounded and dying were huddled on the foredeck while the able-bodied fought the fires. A splendid naval victory was turned from a momentous and glorious occasion into a sordid one. In less than twenty-four hours, Glossop would admit before witnesses that he was "ashamed" to have committed such an act against a helpless and defenceless ship.

On the *Emden*, even before the new bombardment from the *Sydney*, the situation was indescribable. The foredeck, torn and twisted by the rain of explosives and heated beneath from the fires below, held scores of wounded and dying men. Moving

among them was the towering figure of von Müller, a bandage around his head, a bloody cloth in his right hand. The ship's doctors were themselves wounded, but were able to supervise the care of the wounded, who, like the dying, were crying for water when there was no water. Some beer had been brought on deck, and some of the men were given small amounts to cool their pain. Sailcloth was torn into strips to bind breaks and fractures. Cotton clothing was stripped into bandages, while sailors braved fires below to retrieve first-aid supplies, particularly morphine and disinfectants. Every deed at this time was an act of bravery. Around the men swirled the smoke and heat from the fires. Those fighting the flames below were blackened and blistered by the ordeal, and they were urged on by von Müller who moved among them to offer encouragement.

At the moment there was no way to abandon the broken *Emden*. The lifeboats were shattered. A line had so far failed to snag on the shore, and the furious breakers dashing with high columns of spray over the razor-sharp reefs made it impossible to swim to the island. From time to time shark fins appeared on the ocean side and on the lagoon side of the reef, a deterrent to the strongest German swimmers. Several crewmen attempted to establish an intermediate base on the coral outcroppings but the continuous force of the frothing breakers made this impossible also.

Attention was turned to the fires which were slowly yet surely being confined to the mid-section and aft-section on the first and second decks. One engineer managed to work his way through the smoke, his head swathed in wet towels, to open a sea-cock and flood the ship's magazine. This immediately reduced the danger, but the bucket brigade was now employed in soaking down the foredeck to keep it cool. The fight which had seemed so hopeless now appeared to have a chance of success, but it would still be necessary to get ashore to locate fresh water. Meanwhile, Leutnants Geerde and Schall burned the ship's papers and code books but saved the log, while Prince Hohenzollern destroyed the secret torpedo direction-finders which the German Navy had only recently developed, and which were soon to make their submarines the unseen force which controlled the North Atlantic. Cordite bags on the main

deck aft now caught fire from the heat below, and men were side-tracked to deal with this new development as the flames shot skyward.

As if this were not enough to contend with, a new menace was borne on the winds, horrifying and unbelievable. Scores of giant albatrosses, lured by the blood and the open wounds of the injured and dead, attacked both the dead and the wounded, tearing at the flesh with their sharp beaks. Few of the wounded could fight them off. Some were even too weak to scream for help. Officers Ellerbroek, Andresen, and Haas made their way to a supply of rifles and ammunition, and back on the forecastle Witthoeft issued them to the crewmen. The rifles killed or frightened most of the birds, and they flew off only to re-group and return. The giant birds continued to wheel in the sky and then swoop with terrific speed to the deck and rush at the men. Some of the able sailors protected the wounded by swinging their rifle butts at the birds, as it was not easy to hit them with rifle fire, and bullets through their wings failed to stop them. Finally the gruesome attack ended.

Now into the all-out struggle came the well-aimed shells of the *Sydney*, raining upon the shattered decks of the *Emden*, exploding among the wounded and dead and those fighting to save the others.

And all because the stricken ship had not answered a flag message, which was ridiculous in the first place, and because a tattered German Ensign was still flying atop one of the surviving masts. Future writers and historians would be careful to delete this account from their description of this phase of the battle. Nevertheless, it has been officially recorded and condemned.

At first von Müller thought that the magazine had not flooded completely and that flames and heat had reached the shells. It took several minutes to realize the Australians were lobbing shells into this helpless ship. One sailor, realizing the ensign was still flying, shinned up the mast and brought it down, but not before the rain of shells created utter havoc and almost a complete breakdown of the fire-fighting and first-aid chores.

More than fifty of the wounded sailors lying on the exposed foredeck were killed in this phase of the battle. First-aid helpers and fire-fighters were caught without protection and were blown

to bits. Surgeon Schwabe, who was the assistant to the senior surgeon, Lieutenant Dr. Luther, had been wounded previously, but despite his pain had continued to work among the men. Now he was wounded again, and dying. His medical orderlies were killed outright. Even after the flag was hauled down, the shells continued. The *Sydney* sailors painted crude remarks on each shell before they slammed it home into the breech, not realizing the terrible conditions aboard the enemy hulk.

Once again von Müller miraculously escaped death or injury. He yelled for his men to save themselves by jumping overboard to escape the new fires that had broken out and the continuing shell-fire. *One hundred and twenty-five officers and men lay dead and others would soon join them in this "paradise on earth" now turned into a hell.* When the firing had ceased, Glossop sent two officers and a crew to the burning ship. They were horror-stricken by what they saw, and the two Australian officers returned to the *Sydney*, one of them babbling incoherently from the shock and the other so sickened that he wept unashamedly before Captain Glossop.

Glossop acted quickly. He sent a crew with casks of water to the *Emden* and another group with first-aid supplies. He also sent a message to von Müller that he would remove the survivors the next morning.

What was the reason for delay? He knew now of the indescribable conditions aboard the still-burning *Emden*. He knew, too, that it was the code of war that, when the battle was over, the dead were buried and the wounded taken care of.

He later gave as his excuse the fact that he wanted to take the Germans left behind on Direction Island. But Garsia wrote that "it was getting dark and we did not know for certain that the cruiser *Königsberg* might not be near, so we could do no rescue work that night and had to steam away."

Yet, although Garsia mentioned the fact that it was getting dark, Glossop's own report of the action showed that he had finally stopped firing at 4.35 p.m., hardly dark in the summer in this part of the tropics.

The reason for this decision will never be known. In any event, Glossop sailed toward the Cocos but didn't reach the islands. Instead, he cruised about the sea between the Cocos

and North Keeling all through the night, holding off his visit to Cocos until dawn. As evening and night drew its cooling cloak over the heat of the day, von Müller and his surviving officers and crew worked among the wounded, cooling the fevers with sea water, tying up gaping wounds and patching cuts and bruises. The Chinese crew of the *Buresk*, provided with a launch by the *Sydney*, had managed to get the boat over the reefs into the quietness of the lagoon, and were rigging lines to bring the sick to shore. Six of the sailors were scurrying around lonely North Keeling, gathering armfuls of gulls' eggs. Others were looking for water, but they failed to find any. All through the night the sailors worked in exhausting shifts to carry as many of the wounded to shore as they could before the hated enemy returned.

Note: The following is the letter demanding surrender, which Glossop afterwards insisted he had sent to the *Emden*, although his log shows no record of it, and neither does von Müller's official account. (This letter is reproduced in the illustrations section.)

H.M.A.S. "Sydney,"
at sea
9th November, 1914

Sir,

I have the honour to request that in the name of humanity you now surrender your ship to me. In order to show how much I appreciate your gallantry, I will recapitulate the position.

(1) You are ashore, 3 funnels and 1 mast down and most guns disabled.

(2) You cannot leave this island, and my ship is intact.

In the event of your surrendering in which I venture to remind you is no disgrace but rather your misfortune, I will endeavour to do all I can for your sick and wounded and take them to a hospital.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
John C.T. Glossop.
Captain.

The Captain,
H.I.G.M.S. "Emden".

The Escape

Captain Glossop waited until the sun had risen before attempting to work his cruiser through the tortuous channel into the harbour of Port Refuge. It seemed strange that only twenty-four hours earlier the lagoon had sheltered the notorious *Emden*, but now, on the brilliant morning of November 10, Glossop was concerned with only one thing – capturing the German raiding party and freeing the telegraph staff so that they could repair the station and continue with their important duties. Since the *Emden* had been wrecked, Glossop decided to send a small shore party to the Germans telling them of the battle and requesting they surrender at once.

Imagine the surprise of the officer in charge of the landing party when they were greeted by the station superintendent, Darcy Farrant, and his companions with the words: "Welcome to Direction Island, and what are you looking for?"

The officer in charge sarcastically reminded Farrant that Germans were enemies of the Empire and he had come to seek the unconditional surrender of von Mücke and his group. Farrant told him that the Germans were no longer on the island. They had escaped during the previous evening in an old schooner called the *Ayesha*, which was ill-equipped to sail anywhere, let alone for the nearest land more than 500 miles away. The startling news was flagged to Glossop, who became infuriated at the continuation of the bad luck that had dogged him since destroying the *Emden*. First the loss of the *Buresk* and her valuable coal, and now this. How would he ever explain it?

Glossop was exactly one day late in trying to round up the German landing party.

As we have already seen, when von Mücke had realized that the *Emden* was heading back to sea, he had run with the fat Schmidt beside him, and the station staff men following, to the northern tip of Direction Island. In great distress of spirit he had watched the *Emden* lashing north-westward, black smoke curling over her starboard side from the strong south trade-wind. On the north-east horizon he had seen the smoke cloud of the approaching *Sydney* and known at once that the intruder was no merchantman but a warship travelling at top speed.

He knew then that the die was cast. He ordered Schmidt to return to the jetty and assist Gyssling and the bluejackets in their attempt to locate and sever the submarine cables. Then he turned and with his powerful binoculars watched the entire battle between the *Emden* and the *Sydney*, until the *Emden* impaled herself on the reef of North Keeling Island twelve miles away. It would not be long now before the enemy would land on Direction Island to hunt down his raiding party.

Von Mücke could run like a deer when he needed to, despite his six-foot-two-inch frame. He galloped to the operations centre of the station, where flames were still consuming several of the buildings, and he called his two officers to his side. He learned that the sailors had wasted an hour over a spare cable abandoned in the lagoon, and that it was only after much time and effort that they had been able to raise the Perth cable and sever it.

Von Mücke was not happy to learn only one of the three cables had been broken, but there were other and more important duties to perform. He placed the island under martial law, and ordered the British from the lagoon area, suggesting they hide far back in the palm forest to be out of harm's way when the enemy attacked. He knew the attack would be made by boat, because the commander of the British warship would never shell the island for fear of endangering the lives of the British inhabitants.

Thirty feet in from the lagoon shore, bluejackets cut down palm trees and made them into a protective bulwark, filling in

the chinks with coral. By noon they had a fairly strong defensive wall that could command the lagoon and particularly the jetty.

From a vantage point on Farrant's house roof one of the German sailors watched the distant *Sydney* as she lay off North Keeling Island. His job was to yell the alert to von Mücke the moment she started heading for the Cocos. But when she finally moved northward and then north-westward and was soon completely out of sight, von Mücke guessed rightly that she was chasing the *Buresk*, and he decided on a change of plan.

"It will be hours before they get here," von Mücke told Schmidt (as he recalled in his diary). "We might have a chance to escape after all."

Schmidt looked at him with eyes wide open. For a moment he thought that von Mücke was cracking up from the strain, but von Mücke was smiling and pointing at a white sailing vessel moored further down the lagoon. He had noted the sailing ship when he first entered Port Refuge that morning, and now he needed her. "When I first saw her in the morning I had decided to sink her when leaving the island, but now I was glad I had spared her," he wrote. A sailing ship to von Mücke was like a scalpel to a skilled surgeon. He had sailed the North Sea since he was ten years old, and all through his naval training days he had commanded full-rigged sailing ships and schooners on trips that spanned the world. He was more at home under sail than he ever was on a cruiser, and the sight of the ship standing clean and white before him now, mirrored in the blue lagoon of the harbour, was enough to send shivers of anticipation up his spine. He knew that here was a chance to escape, if only the enemy delayed its visit to Direction Island.

His planning now changed from defence to escape, and after setting up a skeleton force with machine guns behind the bulwark of interlaced palms, he set about the task of getting provisions from the station and moving the sailing vessel to the Direction Island jetty. In the steam pinnace he chugged over to the side of the ship, and at her gangplank he was met by three men. One of them, John Partridge, shoved a rifle against von Mücke as he started up the gangplank. The two

others leaned over the rail of the schooner and in an unconcerned manner watched the drama on the gangplank.

"Get off," Partridge snarled, "you goddamn Germans aren't welcome here."

"Hey, put down that gun, Partridge," cautioned one of the men at the rail. He was Cosmos Clunies-Ross, a descendant of the freebooter who had taken possession of the islands from the scalawag Hare a century before. The other man, showing mock amusement at the incident, was his brother, Edmund Clunies-Ross. He called out to von Mücke: "Welcome to our island hospitality and come aboard. What do you want?"

"Are you the owners of this ship?" asked von Mücke.

"Yes, we are," replied Cosmos.

"Then I'm afraid I will have to take her from you. I'd pay you something for her but I haven't enough money."

"May I ask where you intend sailing?"

"I intend to get out of here for Batavia or some place," replied von Mücke.

"This hulk is rotting, and the sails are old and are shredding; you'd never make it. We used her for years carrying copra to Sumatra, but we haven't sailed her in over five years and she's in pretty poor shape. But, you can have her if you want her. . . we call her the *Ayesha*."

"Where did you get the name?"

"Ayesha was the wife of George, third king of our islands," Cosmos haughtily pointed out, and waved his right arm in a generous arc that referred to the surrounding group of islands. Ayesha was born right here on Pula Tikis, and I am told she was a beautiful woman . . . as beautiful as this ship when we first got her. But she is old and decrepit now. You'll never get to Batavia or any place else. And you'd be a fool to try."

"Far better to take a chance on this than rot in a Singapore prison," retorted von Mücke, and he ordered his bluejackets aboard to weigh anchor and fix a stout rope to tow the *Ayesha* to the Direction Island jetty about half a mile to port of her mooring. It was immediately apparent that the sailors had no idea how to handle a schooner, and von Mücke knew that he would have to supervise every duty on this ship if he was ever to escape from the area. Schmidt and Gyssling, he knew, had

had cadet training under the canvas as had all German naval officers, but very few ratings ever received the privilege. The anchor was raised and a rope was fastened between the steam pinnace and the *Ayesha*'s bows, and slowly the schooner began to creak toward the jetty. Because of the lagoon shallows, von Mücke was unwilling to risk taking her alongside and instead decided to provision the *Ayesha* from the small boats.

Ashore, he was informed by Schmidt that the lookout stationed on Farrant's roof saw no sign of the enemy returning, and von Mücke breathed a sigh of relief. His men seized all the food stocks they could find: four casks of water, cooking lard, tinned beef, tinned vegetables, coconuts for their milk, and meat; everything they could stack into the boats. "I am sorry to have to take your food, but you'll get more soon, and I'll need it for my trip," von Mücke told Farrant. In addition to the food von Mücke, who had noted the rotting sails of the *Ayesha*, scoured the station buildings searching for spare canvas, thread and needles. If he was going to make Batavia, he needed sails that would stand the whip of the steady trade winds for several weeks, if necessary.

While the final preparations were under way, von Mücke and Schmidt made a thorough inspection of the schooner. No doubt about it, she had once been a fine ship from her oaken keel to her bleached hardwood decks, and from her hand-carved stem to her stern. Even in her old age her lines were eager and graceful. She was a three-masted schooner, each mast being the same height, not unusual in the East Indies trading ships. The foremast was rigged with two square sails, while the mainmast and mizzenmast were fore-and-aft rigged with gaff sails.

The *Ayesha*, therefore, could have been called a hermaphrodite brig, because she carried the bowsprit and foremast of a brig and the mainmast of a schooner. She thus had the great advantage of square rigging as well as fore-and-aft rigging for good speed and superb stability. According to figures that had been carved into her oaken keel, she was a ship of 97 tons, thirty metres in length and eight metres in width. An old weather-beaten log in her small deckhouse amidships revealed that she had originally been manned by a skipper and a crew

of five. Today she would attempt to carry 46 Germans to safety. The deckhouse was divided into two cabins and a small chartroom, and von Mücke took one cabin while Schmidt and Gyssling took the other. The chartroom was furnished with a crude table and wooden benches, and it was agreed that this should serve as a navigation and smoking room, and for occupation by the watch officer. Charts stuffed into the rafters proved to be old sailing charts of Sumatra, long out of date but with faded compass headings.

In the extreme forepart of the *Ayesha*, below decks, was the crew's cabin, not large enough to hold more than six men, and with the odour of rotting wood and musk permeating the stale air. The stink of the bilge was overpowering. Von Mücke recalled that when he had been in training as a youth, bilges were often cleaned with vinegar, and he had his men seize the station's entire stock. He could see that his crew would be kept busy on this run. The main hold was swarming with cockroaches, which meant that the crew would have to sleep on the exposed deck of the schooner.

Aft of the main hold ladder were two small cabins fitted with bunks, but because of the vermin they could be used only as storehouses. Aft of these, and directly before the rudder, von Mücke discovered another small cabin. A sign over the door identified it as the navigation room, and von Mücke thought this would be the best place to bunk the petty officers. It had good ventilation and light. Next to the navigation room was a large well-lighted area called the "kitchen." There were no plates, knives or forks, only an old iron stove designed to feed a handful of men, not 46 hungry sailors. So von Mücke had his sailors round up the two other stoves on the island (one of them an open-hearth arrangement), and then seized Farrant's supply of cutlery as well as several large iron kettles, frying pans, and small cooking pots. Some of the cooking would have to be done with salt water, which meant that plenty of fresh water would be required to quench the thirst of the crew. Von Mücke thought he had sufficient water in the four huge casks, but he was soon to find that he was woefully under-supplied. In any case, he had Schmidt round up all the seltzer bottles in the station buildings as an added precaution. He tried to

think of everything in a few hours that would last his men for weeks. It wasn't easy, and he was sure that he had overlooked something but he just couldn't put his finger on it. He and Schmidt (Gyssling was busy securing the supplies) checked and re-checked the things they would need for the trip, and as the late afternoon was now upon them, von Mücke decided it was time to cast off.

Farrant and La Nauze attempted to dissuade von Mücke from leaving. They told him the *Ayesha* would never make it to Batavia, and that the reason she had been abandoned by the Clunies-Ross brothers was because she would be unseaworthy in any kind of rough weather. But von Mücke pointed out that he had no alternative, and that he had enough men to work at repairs and try to keep the vessel in good shape. He had a good carpenter in the group, and he had managed to find a hammer, a wood chisel, an axe, and a quantity of nails. He had also remembered to amass a large pile of firewood for the ship's stoves.

Von Mücke recalled in his diary the attempts by the staff to dissuade him from the long and hazardous journey in these words :

When the Englishmen on the island realized it was my intention to sail off in the schooner, they all warned me with great earnestness against trusting ourselves to her, saying that the *Ayesha* was old and rotten. Furthermore, they informed me that the *Minotaur* and a Japanese cruiser were in the vicinity of the island and that we would surely fall prey to one of them. When in spite of all these warnings, we remained firm in our purpose and continued the work of getting the *Ayesha* ready for sea, the sporting side of the situation began to appeal to the Englishmen, and they almost ran their legs off in their eagerness to help us.

Could it have been gratitude that impelled them to lend us their aid? It was a question I was never able to answer to my satisfaction, although, to be sure, several of them did express a feeling of relief at the thought that now the fatiguing telegraph service, with its many hours of over-work and its lack of diversion, was a thing of the past.

They not only showed us where the provisions and the water were kept, but urgently advised us to take the provisions from the one side, where they were new and fresh, rather than from the other, where they were stale. They fetched out cooking utensils, water, barrels of petroleum, old clothes, blankets and the like, and themselves loaded them on hand carts and brought them to us at the jetty. From every side invitations poured down upon us; my men were supplied with pipes and tobacco; in short, the Englishmen did all they could to help us out.

Nor were they sparing with advice as to the course we ought to take, and time proved that all they told us of wind and weather and currents was in every way trustworthy. As the last of our boats left the shore, the Englishmen gave us three hearty cheers, wished us a safe journey, and expressed their gratitude for the moderation which we had shown in the discharge of our duty, wherein all our men had behaved generously, they said. Then, cameras in hand, they swarmed on the *Ayesha*, taking pictures of us.

Von Mücke realized with a start that the afternoon had flown during the feverish activity of provisioning the *Ayesha*, and he knew he must clear the harbour before sundown. Accordingly he worked like a madman among his sailors, ordering them aloft to rig the sails, while he shouted instructions and encouragements. At 6.30 p.m. von Mücke ordered the two cutters to be attached to the stern, while the steam pinnace was linked to the prow, to draw the *Ayesha* out of the lagoon to the ocean.

"I'll make sailors of you yet," shouted von Mücke as he placed his men along the sides and in the rigging, ready to unfurl the sails when clear of the treacherous reefs.

Waving farewell to the Direction Island staff, the German sailors turned their attention to their task ahead. As von Mücke described it:

The oncoming darkness warned me to make my way as speedily as possible out of the harbour, for the dangers of the coral reefs made it unsafe for navigation after nightfall. We had taken aboard water for four weeks and provisions

for eight. The sails had been bent as best they could. I made a short speech, and with three cheers for the Emperor the pennant fluttered up to the masthead of His Majesty's latest ship, the schooner *Ayesha*. Slowly the steam launch took us in tow. I climbed to the top of the foremast, and from there I could best discern where lay the reefs and shoals, for charts we had none. With the boatswain's whistle, I gave the launch orders to steer to starboard or to port, according to the lay of the reefs.

Our departure was much too slow to suit us. The sun was setting, and in these latitudes, so near the equator, there is no twilight. No sooner does the sun disappear below the horizon than the blackness of midnight reigns. We had not passed quite through the danger zone of the reefs before it grew so dark, that from my position in the foremast, I could not see ahead sufficiently far to direct our course. In order to be able to see anything at all, I climbed down into the port fore-channels close by the water, and shouted my orders from there. Just as we were passing the last reef that might prove dangerous to us, we spent some anxious moments. Suddenly, in spite of the darkness, I could see every pebble, every bit of seaweed on the bottom, unmistakable evidence we had gotten into shallow water. But our lucky star guided us over this shoal and we did not run aground. Meanwhile, we had set some sail and had thus lightened the work of the steam launch, which still had us in tow.

Before long, we were free of the sheltering islands, and the long heavy swells of the ocean put some motion into our new ship. When we were far enough out to sea to sail our boat without danger of running into the surf to the leeward, I called the steam launch back to the ship, so as to take off the crew. The heavy swells made the manoeuvre no light task. Again and again the little steamboat was dashed against the side of the *Ayesha*, and these encounters gave me considerable concern. I had no confidence in the *Ayesha*'s ability to endure with safety such vigorous demonstrations of friendship.

Finally, however, we succeeded in ridding ourselves of

the steam launch in this way: the last man aboard her started her engine again with the little steam that was left in her boiler. Then, we reached over with a boat hook and turned the rudder of the steam launch to port. Curtseying elegantly, the little boat drew away from us and soon vanished in the darkness. Whither it went, I do not know. In all likelihood, it found a grave in the surf that beat wildly only a few hundred yards away. Perhaps, however, it is still beating about the ocean, raiding on its own account.

After the steam pinnace disappeared, von Mücke called for more sail, but his crewmen knew nothing about sailing. So he, Schmidt and Gyssling climbed into the foremast rigging to set the square sails. By 8.00 p.m. that dark night of November 9, the *Ayesha* creaked and groaned under the weight of men and sail and caught the trades that were blowing twelve to fifteen knots from the south. The good breeze and the long heavy swells carried the old ship like a queen, shining ghostly white in the blackness of the night, and making good time on a course generally north-east. The air was warm and delightful, and those of the weary crew who were not on watch spread themselves on the decks and slept. The night was uneventful except that several of the sailors awoke from time to time with stinging sensations on their arms and legs and particularly on their feet. This strange experience, not reported to von Mücke, was a portent of trouble ahead.

But the new day dawned clear and warm, with the breeze steady and dependable and the men refreshed. There was no sight of the cruiser *Sydney* or any other ship. Von Mücke, concerned about the possibility of other warships in the area, climbed to the foremast spreader and, holding a rope with his right hand, swung with his *Ayesha* for some two hours scanning the horizon for a pursuing ship. He knew he had made good time during the night, possibly more than eighty miles since leaving Port Refuge, and he guessed that the enemy which had destroyed the *Emden* would not likely venture so far from the Cocos to search for him. As it was, Commander Glossop believed the raiding party was up to some trickery, and that when they discussed Batavia as their goal they were really

heading elsewhere, and he circled the Cocos and North Keeling waters in vain.

The crew was elated by the fact that the enemy had been outwitted, but preparing breakfast proved somewhat of an ordeal. The old stoves had little draught, and certainly not enough space to cook forty-six breakfasts. Bluejackets took some of the pieces of galvanized metal that had been abandoned in the hold and used them to form a top for the hearth. This permitted twenty of the crew at one time to sit around the hot galvanized iron and heat rice in a cup, cook strips of salt pork, and toast the bread which the cooks had made during the night. The motion of the *Ayesha*, rocking from side to side and dipping up and down in the troughs, made it impossible for the men around the hearth to abandon their cooking pots for even a second. But the pork and the boiled rice were wolfed down with great gusto, and von Mücke permitted several cans of fruit to be opened for this thanksgiving occasion. The men all cheered their commander for this gesture, and von Mücke grinned in happy response. With the strong trades and a stout ship and plenty of water to last for weeks, with food aboard and food in the sea, the voyage appeared to be blessed by good fortune.

Meanwhile, Glossop, assured that the Germans could not have sailed far from the Cocos, decided to lend assistance to the station staff before pursuing the von Mücke party. His men found that the station had been virtually destroyed, but by patching some of the broken equipment and retrieving some of the telegraph parts that had been hidden in the palm groves at the beginning of the raid, the staff was able by mid-morning to send a message to Batavia telling of the island's plight and requesting food and other supplies. One submarine cable had been cut in two, and transmitting hardware was needed at once. Water could be obtained from the Clunies-Ross estate on the adjoining island, but the Germans had requisitioned most of the food and had been careful to remove all the tools and important hardware on the station. Batavia promised help as rapidly as the stocks could be located, and said that they would probably be sent by the *Empress of Asia* which was in the vicinity, *en route* to Aden. She would be directed to the

Cocos with the needed supplies and could be expected in three to four days.

Glossop gave Farrant one of the *Buresk*'s lifeboats, since the station's boat had been stove in by the Germans, and also left several cases of tinned beef. In return he asked Farrant for medical supplies and the use of Dr. Ollershead with two others for temporary duty on board *Sydney* when he brought the *Emden*'s wounded aboard. This request was granted, and the *Sydney* weighed anchor and steamed from the lagoon.

But Glossop had no intention of returning to the stricken *Emden* for some time. He intended to sweep the sea around the coral group expecting to find von Mücke and his raiding party on a sailing ship that would be easy to spot, even at long distance. He made a sweep eastward from the islands because he expected that von Mücke would head for the East Indies, but he could find no sign of the escapees. Then he turned the *Sydney* south, and at great speed zig-zagged for two hours without sighting a sail. Then he turned westward and he was now south of the Cocos. He made a wide circle, while all available officers scanned the horizon with their binoculars. But there was no sign of the *Ayesha*. It was not until one o'clock that Glossop bitterly gave up the search. This may have been due to the insistence of Captain Silver in *Melbourne* that he return soon to the convoy. The convoy leader still feared that the *Königsberg* was in the vicinity.

The *Sydney* dropped anchor off North Keeling, and the cutter putted to the broken *Emden* with Dr. Ollershead and the Cocos staff, as well as officers and crewmen of the cruiser. They carried medical supplies and several casks of water. Glossop seemed to be concerned now about the condition of the *Emden* crew, but he was incapable of putting mercy before duty. He sent an ultimatum to von Müller that all officers and men of the *Emden* must agree to British discipline, and must not attempt to damage the *Sydney* fittings if they expected a guarantee of safe passage to Colombo. Unless he got the promise, he left a veiled threat that the crew would be abandoned. The circumstances were recorded in the war archives of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

Lt. Garsia wrote:

I was sent over to her in one of the cutters. Luckily her stern was sticking out beyond where the surf broke, so that with a rope from the stern of the ship, one could ride close under one quarter, with the boat's bow to seaward. The rollers were very big and the surging to and fro and so on made getting aboard fairly difficult. However, the Germans standing aft gave me a hand up and I was received by the captain of the *Emden*. I told him from our captain, that if he would give his parole, the captain was prepared to take all his crew on board the *Sydney* and take them straight to Colombo. He stuck a little over the word "parole," but readily agreed when I explained the exact scope of it.

And now came the dreadful job of getting the badly wounded left on the *Emden* into the waiting boats. There were fifteen of these. Luckily we have a very good pattern of light stretcher into which men can be strapped. We got three badly wounded into each boat. The Germans were all suffering badly from thirst so we hauled the boat's water casks up on deck and they eagerly broached them giving the wounded some first. . . . When I got the chance with all the boats away, I went to have a look around the ship. I cannot describe what I saw. With the exception of the forecastle, she was nothing but a shambles, and the whole thing was most shocking. The German doctor asked me for some morphine and sent me after it. But I never went forward again. I couldn't stand it.

The trans-shipping of the wounded was very difficult because of the heavy swells, and only the very badly wounded were removed on November 10. Since the *Emden* was still afire below decks, von Müller's primary concern had been to get all the remaining men to the island as swiftly as possible. It was apparent that the *Sydney* was not intending to remove any more crewmen that day, as her boats had not returned. However, things were getting ship-shape ashore. The men had gulls' eggs cooking, and broken coconuts were laid out in rows, the cool milk still in their half shells. The wounded were fed and cared for by those who were fit. Darkness fell over the scene. The

fires of the *Emden* glowed steadily and the hissing clouds of steam from the hot plates of her sides rose upward to meet the low hanging stars. About 11.00 p.m. Glossop's cutter again arrived off the *Emden* and, finding no one aboard, moved as close to the breakers as was possible without being damaged by the sharp-edged reef. An officer with a megaphone called out to von Müller that the commander of the *Sydney* would permit him to spend the night aboard the cruiser rather than spend it on the sandy atoll.

Von Müller refused. He was embittered deeply over the shelling of his helpless ship and the heavy death toll that had been caused by this wanton act. He intended to have words with Glossop when they met, but in the meantime the wounded needed first-aid as well as protection from the rats that swarmed over the island.

Working tirelessly to save the remnants of his faithful crew, von Müller at this moment would have been surprised and even proud of the mixed emotions that were being engendered by the news of the *Emden*'s destruction.

She had captured the hearts of millions, and the exploits of her crew and her brave captain, the first hero to emerge from the stalemate of war, had provided a daily saga of high adventure unmatched in the annals of the sea. King and commoner alike had followed the daring deeds of the solitary wanderer who had swept the high seas like a pirate ship, swooping down on ships of commerce and war alike, spreading consternation wherever she went, hunted by almost the entire Allied navy in the Far East.

Straining to live from hand to mouth in hostile seas, von Müller had managed to keep his men well fed and happy and without loss of their weekly religious periods of worship. He had treated his captured men and women with courtesy and respect, acceding to every wish that was possible to grant under the strange circumstances of war. As a result, von Müller was as much a hero to his enemies as he was to the Germans. The loss of the brave little cruiser was a personal loss in millions of homes in every corner of the world. In ninety-five days at sea, she had captured more than two dozen ships and had sunk cruisers and destroyers and raided large cities when the

merchant victims became scarce. Typical of the feelings engendered by the loss of the *Emden* was the headline in a Sydney, Australia, newspaper on November 12: EMDEN CAPTAIN SAVED.

However, outside of Allied naval circles, there was one isolated place where the news of the *Emden*'s loss was received with great and joyous celebration. This was at Lloyd's of London, the world-famous association of marine underwriters.

The *Emden* had been a great thorn in their flesh. She had sunk cargoes valued at more than £3,000,000, a fantastic loss in 1914. She had sent 17 English ships to the bottom, and had captured three others, raising marine insurance rates from a normal 2 per cent to 8 per cent by the end of October. Tin and rubber from Malaya had skyrocketed as a result of the *Emden*'s raiding, and tea had become scarce and expensive.

Lloyd's made the joyful news of the ship's destruction public by its traditional, highly dramatic method accorded only to tidings of great national importance.

On this momentous morning of November 10, the ship-owners and importers were as usual gathered at the underwriters, watching the changing rates, and nervously awaiting further news of the marauding *Emden* and other German raiders. The business of the day was in full swing when suddenly, clanging out above the noise of the transactions, came the tolling of the famous Lutine Bell from its niche above the trading floor.

The Lutine had rung rarely in Lloyd's history; its booming voice was saved only for the announcement of the most dramatic and significant events — whether triumphant or tragic. Now, all sounds stopped on the trading floor. Was the news good or bad? Once, over a hundred years ago, the Lutine had boomed out word of Nelson's victory at Trafalgar. Today's tidings were to have almost as great an impact.

The famous Lloyd's Crier mounted the rostrum beneath the bell and in the traditional rolling tones he began:

“Gentlemen . . .” (he waited for absolute silence) “Gentlemen . . . it is officially announced that the *Emden* . . .”

He did not get the chance to finish. Pandemonium broke loose. Wild cheering and yelling drowned out the voice of the

Crier as he attempted to regain order. Hats and papers were hurled into the air. Hundreds of feet stamped on the floor. Shouts and whoops electrified the ancient chambers and flowed out into the streets, where a crowd began to gather. And now the crowd outside of Lloyd's began to cheer, some of them not even knowing the reason. The revelry continued for more than thirty minutes before the pounding gavel of the Crier and the continuous ringing of the bell brought the pandemonium to a standstill.

"Silence," shouted the Crier. "Silence."

The trading floor quieted, and from the rostrum the rolling tones began again: "Gentlemen . . . it is officially announced that the *Emden* has been destroyed."

The shouting and the tumult began again, and at that instant Lloyd's dropped its insurance rates on all Far East shipping. And that night London underwriters slept soundly for the first time since the war began. (They would continue to sleep soundly until the submarine menace started.)

Churchill was elated by *Sydney*'s victory, but he went out of his way to pay tribute to von Müller and his crew for the gallant way in which they waged their war. King George v personally asked the British Admiralty to return the swords of von Müller and his officers as a mark of respect, and when they reached Colombo this was done ceremoniously. In Berlin, flags flew at half-mast. In the town of Emden, a national day of mourning was proclaimed throughout the district, while in Blankenburg, von Müller's home town, the churches held special services and doors were draped in black.

The respected *Times* of London editorialized:

We rejoice that the cruiser *Emden* has been destroyed at last but we salute Captain von Müller as a brave and chivalrous foe. We trust his life has been saved for if he came to London he would receive a generous welcome. Our maritime race knows how to admire a daring and resourceful seaman, and there are few episodes in modern naval history more remarkable than the meteoric career of the little *Emden*. Captain von Müller has captured twenty of our merchant steamers and has sunk seventeen of them.

His ravages have cost us £2,200,000 or about one-half of our total losses up to date in our merchant marine. By legitimate strategy he has sunk a Russian cruiser and a French destroyer. He has bombarded an Indian provincial capital, created a marked panic among certain classes of the native inhabitants of our Indian seaports, swept the Bay of Bengal clear of shipping, isolated the Province of Burma and finished by audaciously endeavouring to destroy a wireless station. In all his exploits, he has behaved with the most perfect courtesy, as the officers and crews of the ships he has sunk have testified. He has never taken a single life unnecessarily, except by accident; he has committed no outrage, and so far as we know, has strictly observed the dictates of International Law. Had all his country fought as he has done, the German nation would not be execrated in the world today.

The *Times* editorial comment, strange as it might seem, did not end here. It went on to make a critical snipe at the British Admiralty. "It has taken fourteen weeks to bring the Germans to task. The official explanations are inadequate, and the fact that the Royal Navy had other and more pressing work to do does not dispose of the issue."

From city to city around the world, the death of the *Emden* continued to bring great praise to von Müller and his crew.

The London *Daily Telegraph* carried the story of the sinking as if it was an obituary, and editorialized: "It is almost in our heart to regret that the *Emden* has been destroyed. The war at sea will lose something of its piquancy, its humour and its interest, now that the *Emden* has gone."

Englishmen were dying in France under the onslaught of German forces, but still those at home continued to be outspoken in their praise of the German cruiser and her German captain. The *Telegraph* went on to say about von Müller: "He has been enterprising, cool and daring in making war on our shipping and has revealed a nice sense of humour. He has, moreover, shown every possible consideration to the crews of his prizes. So far as it is known, he has destroyed over 70,000 tons of shipping without the loss of a single life. There is not a

survivor who does not speak well of this young German, the officers under him and crew obedient to his orders."

The London *Daily News* raised many eyebrows with its editorial: "The English nation has now only one regret and that is that a great part of the *Emden*'s ship's company lost their lives. The captain of the *Emden* is a gallant man full of resource and chivalry. He treated his prisoners well and played his part to admiration."

The *Morning Post* had only one flaw to find in the *Emden* campaign. It protested the subterfuge used by von Müller when he raided Penang. The *Post* recalled how, on that occasion, the *Emden* with her dummy fourth funnel had replied to the challenge of the Russian cruiser, *Zemchug*: "Yarmouth . . . coming to anchor." However, apart from this single criticism, the *Post* was as loud in its praise of von Müller and the gallantry of his men as were the other newspapers.

The *New York Times* ran the full story on the front page and then commented, editorially: "The extraordinary skill, audacity, and heroism of the *Emden*'s officers and men will not soon be forgotten. She was no privateer out for booty but a ship of the German people. She had no harbor or refuge."

The Berliner *Tageblatt*: "The *Emden*'s career was bound to come to an end, but her career will never be forgotten. It was indeed a glorious one."

Captain Glossop's name was conspicuously absent from the laudatory stories in the papers, notably in the English dailies.

The attitude of the people everywhere was one of regret for the loss of the *Emden*. Von Müller became the hero of the fray, and Glossop became the villain. By reading the editorials of that day, one would have thought that Glossop should never have attacked the *Emden*, never have sunk her, or killed any of her crew.

However, he did receive some deserved recognition. The French Government immediately awarded him the French Legion of Honour. The Japanese bestowed on him the Order of the Rising Sun.

Aftermath

Back on lonely Keeling Island, von Müller was unaware of the international interest in the loss of his ship. He was wholly occupied with trying to save lives. And during the pre-dawn darkness he had lost one of his most-needed helpers. The gallant surgeon, Schwabe, who had worked unceasingly and unselfishly despite his own wounds, performing operations and even amputations under appalling conditions, had finally collapsed from pain and exhaustion, and died in von Müller's arms. He was carried tenderly to a high point of land between the windward reef and the lagoon, and there laid to rest with crude military honours beside the increasing number of driftwood crosses. Palm fronds were strewn over the graves as von Müller intoned the services. Music for this sad and solemn occasion was provided by the continuous boom of the charging surf.

After the burials, the sun climbed higher and hotter, and there began again the slow and arduous task of getting all the wounded on board the *Sydney*. Each man in turn was strapped to a litter and carried through the pounding surf to the barrier reef. At this point in the transfer, six crewmen, German and English together, lashed by ropes, would haul the stretchers over the razor-sharp coral protuberances and through the cascading foam to the *Sydney*'s boats. Once the boat-loads had reached the *Sydney*, lying a mile south of the island, the whole painful process began again. Sometimes it would take as much as an hour to complete the transfer of six men.

As the wounded were brought on board the *Sydney*, most

of them were laid out on the deck to be attended by the ship's surgeons and first-aid parties, assisted by Dr. Ollershead. Their first and greatest need was for water. After that came morphine, and sleep, and the troubled dreams of the vanquished.

By late afternoon the job was finally completed, with the rest of the *Emden*'s crew also on board. Only von Müller remained on the island with Leutnants Schall and Fikentscher. He had one other duty to perform, and he walked to the height of ground where the graves were located in neat rows among the coral sand. These were his men, and he walked past each one slowly, noting the names and ranks, while Fikentscher, his role officer, wrote them down for the official report.

When the counting had been completed and the names of the dead checked off against the master crew list, von Müller stood at attention and saluted the German cemetery for a full minute, before turning and making his way hastily to a waiting cutter. He walked through the lagoon to the coral barrier and then splashed through the surf toward his first personal contact with the enemy.

On the way to the *Sydney*, von Müller never took his glance off the ship that had brought him so much fame. He saw that the *Emden* was rapidly being ground to pieces by the tremendous force of the pounding surf and the immovable coral — a perfect combination to destroy any ship — slow, yet inevitable.

The stern of the *Emden* had now settled so deeply on the windward side of the barrier reef that the water level was only three feet from the main deck. One-quarter of the ship was already flooded. Two-thirds of her length was balanced precariously on the reef, and the persistent concussions of the swells were gradually breaking her back.

As von Müller climbed the ship's ladder to the deck of the *Sydney*, he was greeted by three cheers from the Australian sailors who had crowded amidships to see the famous captain who had become a world-wide hero. He looked anything but a hero, or even a ship's captain, at this moment. His uniform was soaked and smeared with blood and sand. His cap was missing. Blood caked his forehead and the sleeve of his right arm was ripped; the cuts in his suit at the shoulders showed the traces of dried blood, and his blond hair was matted with oil. But he

was still the famous von Müller, and the cheering was loud and genuine.

His meeting with Glossop was anything but cordial. Always the naval officer, von Müller saluted Glossop and his officers and then made his way to a cabin that had been allotted to him and his executive officer. He washed, and allowed his uniform to be cleaned and pressed. Later, he met Glossop again. This time, he spoke his mind precisely and with much feeling.

His first crisp question to Glossop was to demand why he had fired on the obviously battered *Emden*. Glossop reminded him that he had twice signalled for his surrender, and von Müller retorted that running a ship aground was surrender enough. (Later, in his official account of the action, von Müller wrote that at no time did he receive an order to surrender. Further to this, he pointed out that Glossop's supposed signals had occurred at a time *after* the *Emden* had ceased action and was on fire.)

Now, in the first confrontation between the two men, Glossop was obviously irritated by von Müller's questioning. He reminded him that the Germans had shown they were not above trickery; the ensign was still flying at the *Emden*'s mast-head, and the smoke could have been a screen for the remaining guns to fire into the *Sydney* if she ventured too close.

Von Müller was not impressed by the explanation, reminding Glossop that the *Emden* guns had ceased firing long before she was beached. He reminded the cruiser's commander that he had established a reputation for fairness and that had a boat been sent to him under a flag of truce, it would have been honoured. In no uncertain terms, von Müller told Glossop his explanations were illogical, and that a report of the firing into his helpless ship would be mentioned at length in his official report to the Germany Admiralty.

Questioning Glossop still further about the delay in getting help to his men (an entire day, in fact) brought the reply that Glossop feared the cruiser *Königsberg* was in the vicinity, and he would be at a disadvantage if caught while stopped and lowering boats.

Von Müller angrily dismissed all these arguments, and as the two men parted in the wardroom, he said "*Captain, had I*

been in your place I would not have acted as you did." Glossop was to remember these words until his dying day.

Glossop wirelessed Colombo and ordered the auxiliary vessel *Empress of Russia* to rush to his side and take off the critically wounded. They were in bad shape and needed surgery. Then he signalled the port commander of Colombo, advising him of his estimated time of arrival, and telling him that there was to be no celebration whatsoever when the *Sydney* arrived. He then advised the Naval Headquarters at Colombo that he was bringing in the *Emden*'s crew and a few of the less seriously wounded, and that he wanted first-aid equipment on hand and hospital stretcher-bearers.

These problems settled, Glossop now had a more serious one to handle. Fighting had broken out among the Germans and the Australians. The Germans accused the "Aussies" of firing on a white flag, and near-riots erupted. Finally Glossop was forced to call upon von Müller to inform his crewmen that this was not true. Von Müller addressed the crews of both ships, telling them that at no time did the *Sydney* fire on a white flag of surrender. This declaration was sufficient to instantly stop the brawling and arguing.

Glossop was grateful to von Müller for his assistance. He realized that the sinking of the *Emden* was of world-wide importance. But he also knew that the high death toll among its much-idolized crew (particularly since so many of the deaths occurred *after* the enemy's guns were silenced) had spoiled his victory, and could lead to unpleasant repercussions.

With this in mind, he wanted no further outbreaks of fighting. Neither did he want his men, nor any of the Germans, talking to people at Colombo, particularly to newspapermen. The less said about the matter the better. Within a few months the engagement, and the circumstances surrounding its climactic ending, would have been forgotten.

But as events were to prove, Glossop would not have control over the feelings that erupted over the *Emden*'s sinking. Even his own superiors would question his conduct in the affair. And the Australians, of all people, would be the angriest.

Meanwhile, as the battle of words over the *Emden*'s death raged on, the *Ayesha* was heading for Batavia on a seemingly

idyllic tropical cruise that would soon turn into an awful nightmare. It was to be an odyssey comparable to that made in 1788, when Captain Bligh of the *Bounty* was, with his men, cast adrift by mutineers. The *Emden* sailors, however, would not only cross endless miles of hostile seas, but also struggle over miles of inhospitable desert before their aching bones and tortured minds would find rest.

Von Mücke had made up his mind to replace the jerry-built kitchen stove with a community stove, to be placed in the centre of the deck, and he called his men together to build it. It took several hours to create a fireproof hearth and then lay the sheets of iron over it, to provide good draught through an improvised chimney of galvanized iron. There was also a trough to gather the grease. In order to save the precious supply of fresh water, it had been agreed to use it only when making tea. To test out the arrangement, von Mücke called for the first water cask to be broached, and four men rolled the giant oaken cask to his feet. The wooden peg was pried from the bunghole, and von Mücke sampled the liquid. He spewed it on the deck, much to the dismay of his men, who instantly realized the water was foul.

"It tastes as if it's poisoned," gasped the commander as he choked over the vile fluid. There were three casks left, and he called for the second cask to be broached and asked Schmidt to taste it. Schmidt spewed the liquid over the deck. It was so bad that the men began to think the water had been deliberately fouled by the Direction Island Station staff, and they stared quietly at the two remaining casks — their only hope of salvation.

"Open it," commanded von Mücke, and the third cask was rolled to his feet. He tasted it, and only the flapping of the sails and his guttural curse broke the silence. It was bad also, impossible to hold in the mouth, let alone swallow it. He called for the fourth and last cask and tasted it also. The men could see that this cask was good by the light in von Mücke's eyes and the grinning of his face. "Sweet and pure," he said. But this was small comfort. One cask of water for 46 men destined to sail many weeks at sea. "We must look for rain," von Mücke declared. "We must sail from our course, if necessary, to catch squall lines no matter how far away, and we must make canvas

collectors to be propped above the decks to collect all the water we can, and store it in every utensil that will hold liquid.

The full impact of this serious situation did not then dawn on the *Emden*'s sailors. They would find rainclouds they knew, and rainclouds would provide them with fresh water. It did not occur to them that they might never see rainclouds. At that time of year the Indian Ocean in the equatorial latitudes was crowned by fair-weather galleons of cumulus clouds which sometimes changed into feathery cirrus herring-bones in the sky. These, the mariner knew, meant clear weather and fair sailing for weeks ahead. But von Mücke knew the sea and the meaning of the clouds, and he was concerned. When Schmidt asked him the purpose of the seltzer water, von Mücke told him that these bottles, because they were transportable, would be used only in the lifeboats, in case the *Ayesha* should have to be abandoned.

He reminded Schmidt that close supervision must be kept over the fires in the improvised stoves so that not one spark should escape into the hold or into the sails. Sails catching fire would set the old wooden hulk ablaze in seconds, and the men would have to take to the boats.

Between meals, the crew took lessons from von Mücke in furling and unfurling the canvas sails, raising and lowering them, and tying the knots which they had long ago forgotten, while a dozen crewmen squatted on the narrow deck mending rotten sails with English thread. A large square of damaged sail canvas was located below decks, and was also repaired. This would be used to catch the hoped for rainwater. But until the rains came, von Mücke, despite the men's great thirst, further increased by eating the salt fish that they had caught, cut the water ration to one cup a day.

In the meantime, von Müller, and what was left of his crew, had been landed in Colombo, Ceylon. The British, touchy about the rising world opinion concerning the destruction of the gallant *Emden*, were attempting to stop the wirelessing of news stories about the battle from newspaper interviews with the survivors. However, the censorship only delayed the news by several days. Photos of the action took several weeks to reach newspapers and magazines, and the lurid tales of the bloody ending produced strong reaction around the world.

The editors of the *Scientific American* in the United States viewed the photos of the broken *Emden* and assessed the fight with such phrases as: "our constrained horror at the frightful destruction which well-directed fire can do upon the hull, decks and superstructure of a light cruiser." Those who saw these photographs were informed by the captions that men had been lying on the decks of the *Emden* when this shelling took place. Little wonder, then, that people were furious with the man who had directed the fire. In Britain Captain Glossop's biography, which was contained in the 1914 edition of *Who's Who*, was dropped from the 1915 edition. So great was the feeling against him that he never achieved its pages again.

The attacks on Glossop reached such a level that the government had to step in and remind Australians that the Germans had failed to save a single life from the cruiser *Monmouth* when she was sent to the bottom with all hands at Coronel. But the Australians were still determined to express their feelings. In Sydney, for example, the City Fathers met with the full support of their citizens and the newspapers and proclaimed a "von Müller Day." The streets were to be lined with bunting and flags, and the city would turn out to honour the captain and the crew who had caused them so much distress. The plans were grand and gay. It was to be an occasion to remember. Said the mayor of Sydney: "It gives us the chance to show our recognition of his gallantry and courage."

Cities elsewhere lauded von Müller. The council of the City of London proposed an official welcome for von Müller and suggested the British Government should recognize his gallant conduct in the war by some appropriate means. The city buzzed with excitement at the prospect.

But Glossop promptly explained that Kapitän Karl von Müller was aware of neither the controversy nor the virtual idolatry that had followed his will-o'-the-wisp career as commander of the *Emden*. At the moment, he was a prisoner-of-war in Colombo, forbidden to see any newspapers and kept strictly incomunicado. Scores of newspapermen were dying to talk to him, to photograph him, to get his story of the battle and the destruction of his cruiser. But the Admiralty placed strict censorship on his movements, and would continue to do so. It

knew that he had become a hero even in Great Britain, and anything he said in public might reflect on the Admiralty and on Glossop.

Von Müller, therefore, was only permitted to leave his temporary quarters briefly for the funerals of those crew members of the *Emden* who had died in Colombo hospitals. The navy's security forces seized as many films of the engagement as they could, although a few filtered into newspaper hands. Strict penalties were threatened against any seaman who turned photos over to anyone, particularly photos that had been taken aboard the shambles that once was the *Emden*. Feeling in favour of von Müller was running so high that any mention of the attack on his stricken ship was bound to lead to further serious recriminations. And the Admiralty already had quite enough trouble on its hands.

From the moment that he had arrived in Colombo on November 15 until his secret departure by cruiser on November 17, von Müller was kept busy trying to account for the casualties aboard his ship. It was a difficult task, because of the many men who were absent from the engagement. Their names had not been kept on any special record as they were not expected to be left behind. He had a makeshift list of the crosses on the lonely ground of North Keeling, but no names of those blown overboard during the engagement. The British at first would not co-operate with him by listing the names of the *Emden*'s prisoners, but by personally appealing to Glossop he finally got this list. Only then was he able to make the assessment.

When the survey was complete, von Müller officially listed the death toll in the battle as one hundred and thirty-four. This included seven officers, one staff paymaster, four warrant officers, twenty-five petty officers, ninety-two crewmen, one civilian cook, one barber, and three Chinese laundrymen. Two officers were severely wounded and were in hospital, with two warrant officers, nine petty officers and thirty-one men.

The unharmed survivors included six officers, five warrant officers, thirty-nine petty officers, and sixty-seven men. This list was sent to the German Admiralty by von Müller and was considered to be the official casualty list of the battle. (The West German Government lists only six officers and one

hundred and thirteen other ranks killed in action. They claim that the British kept all the records of the fight, and refused to release the names to Germany except in bits and pieces after the war, at which time discrepancies were noted.)

Von Müller stated in his official report of the battle that the *Emden*'s losses were especially heavy among the gun crews and the ammunition carriers, because, he said, they were working on the exposed decks without adequate gun shields and other protection. He asked the Admiralty to take particular note of this situation. Said he:

I think that I may state definitely that in this action, which unfortunately led to the destruction of His Majesty's Imperial Ship *Emden*, every one of the officers, warrant officers, petty officers and men under my command, did his duty. During her three-month cruise, the *Emden*'s engines made 10,000,000 revolutions, representing a course of 30,000 miles. Through the good work of the engine-room crew and the stokers under the able leadership of Engineer-Leutnant Ellerbroeck for the main engines, Engineer Sub-Leutnant Andresen for the auxiliary engines and Engineer Sub-Leutnant Haas for the boilers, serious engine troubles during the cruise were avoided and even minor mishaps were few in number.

Following his report to the German Admiralty giving his reasons for the raid, and his own description of the battle, von Müller sat down to the painful task of penning a note of sympathy to the next-of-kin of every man who was killed in action. Most of this work was done while he was *en route* from Colombo to Aden, aboard a cruiser in the great Australian convoy that had once held him in abject fear. During this time he made several attempts to compose a chronicle about the cruise of the *Emden*, but each time he would tear up what he had written, because, he said, the loss of his men had caused him so much grief he was still unable to think clearly about it.

He often wondered what had been the fate of von Mücke and his men after they escaped from Direction Island. No one had heard anything about them since. They had simply vanished

into the vastness of the sea. If they had been captured or had arrived at some neutral port, von Müller thought he would have heard something by this time. The British officers in the convoy were very kind to him, and kept him informed of events in Europe and elsewhere.

But he could learn nothing about von Mücke. The British had no intention of letting him know that the escapees were still at large and being hunted by a number of cruisers between the Cocos and Batavia. Nor was he informed that the Kaiser had sent the city of Emden an inscribed scroll of the dead, whose names had been wirelessed to Berlin by the British Admiralty. The Kaiser also sent the city the Iron Cross which he had so recently bestowed on the cruiser, and with it he made a promise that a new cruiser *Emden* would be built, with the Iron Cross of Germany emblazoned on her bows.

The Voyage of the Ayesha

The *Ayesha* was becalmed. The trades that had hurried her on her course to Batavia had softened and died. The sea was a glassy mirror and, without a breath of air, the sun baked the little ship and tortured the crew unmercifully with its skin-cracking heat. But there was always hope that a breeze would soon develop, and von Mücke kept his bronzed sailors mending and repairing canvas sails for the wind and the rains that were sure to follow.

The men fished to replenish the dwindling food supply, but fish had to be cooked in salt water, and their thirsts were becoming a matter of grave concern. Their lips cracked and festered, and their tongues swelled from the dryness, but von Mücke refused to change the water ration which remained at one cupful per day. The ration would not be increased until sufficient rain-water could be collected in the canvas sails which had been spread over the deck to collect the water when it came. Meanwhile the mended sails became the only protection from the blistering sun.

The ocean was devoid of activity. Not a ship had been sighted, nor a smoke cloud, nor a sail. A few frigate birds wheeled in the sky. The fishing worsened, but through it all von Mücke cheered his men with the thoughts of a good time in Padang with all the food and water they could down. To ease the monotony and the pangs of thirst and hunger, one of the sailors played a mandolin which had been seized on Direction Island, while other crewmen formed a choir, a singing group

which became quite good, according to von Mücke's diary. The men looked forward each day to their music lessons.

At night, classes in astronomy were held, and the men studied the heavens. The nights were so clear that standard German 8-power binoculars would reveal the rings of the planet Saturn, the moons of Jupiter and sometimes the faint cobweb glowing of distant nebulae, burning dimly in the eternal void. Each night six men were assigned the duty of keeping the faded chart up-to-date on the relative position of the *Ayesha* on her haphazard course toward Batavia. After the astronomy lesson and before each man chose his space on the oaken mattress, a nightly prayer was offered by Gyssling for deliverance and for rain, one dependent upon the other.

Three days out of the Cocos, the relentless sun increased the reek in the hold, and the crew was forced to clean out the hot and stinking bilge with vinegar and salt water. That night, those who had complained earlier of stinging arms and legs discovered the cause of their discomfort. They were being bitten by the huge cockroaches that inhabited the rotting beams of the hold. These cockroaches were as long as a man's forefinger and as thick as his thumb, and they carved great gouges in the flesh of the crew. Each night they were becoming more bold and more voracious. Keeping the decks scrubbed daily (to give the men exercise) failed to contain the roaches to the *Ayesha*'s hold. Like the lack of water, they were soon to be a serious problem.

On November 13, with no sign of rainclouds on the horizon, von Mücke reluctantly cut the water ration to half a cup a day over the protests of his fellow officers and the grumbling of his men. Schmidt reminded him they would raise Sumatra in two weeks at the most, but von Mücke cautioned that in this area south of the equator, the trades were known to fade away for long spells. Sailing ships had been becalmed for days and weeks in the wilderness of water to which the *Ayesha* was now heading. Even now, the ship was scarcely moving, her limp sails reaching out for the life-giving breeze that had deserted them.

Despite the curriculum that von Mücke had programmed for his men, this first week dragged slowly with very little to break the monotony of sun and sea and clear blue sky. For an

adventurer or tourist the weather would have been delightful, with the soft trades blowing their velvet music through the shrouds, while the great surrounding sea, no longer confused by tortuous currents, pulsed to the long, even swells that scarcely ruffled its surface.

In his diary, von Mücke described the daily routine:

Our men rose with the sun, at six o'clock in the morning. On war vessels, it is the custom to rouse the crew by a call of three long trills given by the petty officers at the same time, on boatswains' whistles. At this signal the men turn out and lash their hammocks. We gave up the attempt to conform to this custom, as the noise that our one boatswain's whistle could make, would hardly have been loud enough to attract the attention of the men. My crew slept side by side, packed like herrings in a box, and all that was needed to awaken them, was to rouse the first one, who, in rising, could not fail to waken his nearest neighbour, who in turn would waken the next, and so on, down the line until the last one was up.

After we were up, the next thing to be done was to wash, provided there was enough water left in the jolly boats from the night before. If it so happened that we could not get a wash, we accepted the situation with cheerful spirit, as being quite in harmony with the total absence of tooth-brushes aboard the ship. But our hair demanded special attention, as it was getting longer and longer. The only comb that we possessed was passed from hand to hand, and our hair tonic was sticky salt water. The rusty condition of our only razor made it necessary to use considerable caution. Those who shaved were called "the dandies."

Then came the cleaning of the ship. Water was hauled up in pails from over the sides and dashed over the deck. A part of the crew was set to work at the pumps to rid the ship of the water that had leaked in overnight. Sailors were also up in the shrouds looking after the latest damage that had been caused during the night and making the necessary repairs. The cook, with two helpers, would be in the forward caboose busy with getting breakfast: rice with coffee

or tea. When this was over, there wasn't much more for the men to do, and time was filled in by learning the mysteries of steering, reading the compass, and servicing the rigging. The only chart we possessed was a large one of half the globe and accordingly was on a very small scale. It began with Hong Kong and Borneo on the East and ended with Suez, Zanzibar, and Mozambique on the West. The long distance to Padang, about 700 nautical miles, was represented on my chart by a space no greater than a hand's breadth.

Meanwhile, the dinner hour had arrived. As there were not enough plates, forks, and knives to go around, we ate in relays. Each man's portion was dished out by the cook under supervision of one of the petty officers from the commissary department. With dinner, tinned meat and rice, a cup of coffee or tea would be served. After that, an afternoon sleep. There was no separation of officers and crew. The deck space was just big enough to accommodate all the men with some degree of comfort on the upper deck. The men formed little groups, and they would lounge, smoke, and play cards with the only deck we could manage from our friends at the Cocos. But some of our crew were devoted fishermen, and over the bulwarks at every available spot hung the fish lines waiting for the unwary fish, but I cannot remember that I ever heard of one being caught. Maybe it was because rice was the only bait.

In the evening as the supper ended and when the sun had set, the men usually assembled on the forward deck and sang. There were a number of good voices among them; their singing in chorus was very pleasing, and as usual, when Germans were having a good time, the *Lorelei* and other tragic songs were those that were sung the most often. But *Puppchen* and the *Song of the Reeperbahn* were not neglected. No particular hour was set for turning in. Everyone lay down to sleep when it suited him, except the watches, the forward lookout, and the man at the wheel. We carried no lights. The two lamps we had gave off more smoke than light. Besides, we were saving our little bit of petroleum for the lamps in case we needed them for signals.

In those first few days the *Ayesha* leaked badly. In a short time we had so much water in the ship that it rose to a height of the iron ballast on which the men slept. When we tried to work the ship's pump we found that it was out of order. The packing of the pistons had been eaten away by rats. So we took the pump to pieces, got the piston out, replaced the missing packing with oil-soaked rags and finally succeeded in pumping the ship dry. All in all, the *Ayesha* cut a sorry figure.

In the second week of the voyage the rains came, mercifully just in time. But with the rains came violent storms and the *Ayesha*'s sails and rigging took a beating. But water was life, and the sailors had contrived to build a collector of canvas sail which was raised at the four corners and had a hole in the centre placed directly over one of the hatches. Below the hatch opening the cleaned-out water casks were filled with the new supply, and every dish, every tin, cup, utensil – even the cork helmets of the bluejackets were used to gather the water.

Von Mücke described the storms in his diary:

The second week was uneventful except for the storms. Often we had to struggle against high gales and thunder-gusts. In fact, they had to be reckoned with both morning and evening of every day. As welcome as the thunderstorms were for the supply of fresh water they brought us, we yet looked forward to them with dread also, because of the strain on the ship and the rigging. In the tropics the coming of a thunderstorm can be seen from afar, and the time of its arrival quite accurately timed. The approach of one of these storms was usually heralded by a few dark clouds near the horizon, the falling rain showing as a long broad streak reaching from sky to ocean. As the clouds rose toward the zenith, the columns of rain came visibly nearer. When the storm was within a thousand metres of us, the sails were furled as far as necessary, and we rode out the gale. We "hove to" then, with close-reefed sails, the ship's head close to the wind, until the gale, which was always accompanied

by a downpour of rain so heavy that we could see nothing except what was immediately in front of us, was over.

One day we had an especially heavy thunderstorm. The clouds hung so low that it seemed as though we could grasp them with our hands. The wind set in more quickly than we had expected, and just as we had begun to shorten our light sails, the tempest was upon us. It seized the mizzen topsail and whipped it furiously through the air. The men on deck could not hold it against the strain; it flew over the mizzen gaff, caught fast on it, and hung there. To secure it at the time was impossible, because of the heavy rolling of the ship. For a while, the flapping of the sail endangered the whole mizzen topmast, but more especially the slender upper part of the mast, which is always only lightly stayed. Its violent motion filled us with anxiety. Moreover, we were now in the worst of the gale and had all we could do to attend to the other sails.

Nevertheless, we finally succeeded in furling all the sails with the exception of a few bits of canvas that had to be left out to give our ship steerage way. The clouds were so heavy that it was almost as dark as night. Unceasingly, the lightning flashed about us, followed unstantly by ear-splitting claps of thunder. So near and so vivid were the flashes of lightning that they blinded us for the moment, and for seconds at a time we could see nothing at all. It was a genuine little cyclone that was sweeping over us.

Then the violent wind suddenly ceased as the centre of the storm reached us, and the air about us grew absolutely still. The high seas and swells continued, however. The ship, suddenly robbed of its support by the almost instant falling-away of the wind, rolled so heavily from side to side that we feared the masts would go overboard without our being able to do anything to prevent it. The atmosphere was filled with electricity; on each of our mastheads burned the St. Elmo's fire, a foot in height. Slowly the thunder-storm passed over. After a few more brief but violent gusts of the recurring gale, the wind died down and blew more steadily and quietly. Soon, nothing remained but a few distant flashes of lightning to remind us of the anxious

hours we had. One after the other the sails were set and we proceeded on our way. But soon afterwards the wind would die entirely.

The times that we were becalmed were perhaps even more unpleasant than when the wind paid us an over-amount of attention, for, with the high and never-ceasing ocean swells, our ship rolled very heavily, whenever there was no breeze to drive her. Then the sails, no longer filled by the wind, flapped from side to side, and the whole ship shivered, and the masts trembled. At such times we often thought it best to furl all sails and so avoid any possible damage to the ship and her rigging. On account of the violent and jerking motion of the ship on such days, life aboard her was extremely unpleasant and very fatiguing. To remain aboard the ship at all, we had to hold on to some support continuously with both hands or else wedge ourselves firmly into a secure corner. On this particular day we were again obliged to furl all sails.

While we were thus in the worst of the rolling, and were swearing vigorously at the ship's eccentricities, suddenly a cloud of smoke was reported in sight on the port bow forward. As we were wholly outside of any course ordinarily followed by steamers, we concluded that the vessel in sight must, like ourselves, have reason to avoid the usual routes of steamship travel. At first we thought it might be our coaling ship *Exford* or the *Buresk*, also running to Padang. On the other hand, it might well be a hostile cruiser that had run into Keeling after the fight, and having heard of our departure, was now looking for us.*

We couldn't elude the smoke cloud as we were now becalmed, but after a few anxious hours it disappeared. Meanwhile, the evening breeze had set in, and with it came the usual torrent of rain. Now we were in the region where the South-east and North-west Monsoons meet. The wind changed every few minutes. First, a gust would strike the

* The smoke cloud could have been one of two ships: the *Empress of Asia* heading from Singapore to the Cocos with transmitter replacements for the wireless station, or the cruiser *Newcastle* hunting the *Ayesha*.

ship forward, and the next minute it would be blowing a gale from aft, a situation that afforded us opportunity to execute some expert and ingenious sailing manoeuvres.

After we had practised close-hauling the sails a number of times, we were suddenly confronted with a task that well nigh proved to be too much for us. A violent gust of wind from the north-west was sweeping down upon our *Ayesha* from forward at the very same time that one from the south was approaching us aft. We were therefore obliged to tack, by close-hauling the foresail, while at the same time the mainsail had to be set for the wind from astern. The two shower baths that the two gusts brought with them could not have been better managed in an up-to-date sanitarium, where alternating hot and cold showers are the feature of the baths. The gusts from the north-west brought a torrent of rain so icy cold that most of us got below decks as fast as we could, whereas the one from the south, which overtook us a few minutes later, showered us with warm water.

So much for the first half of the second week, but as the little ship progressed the winds again diminished, and so did the clouds and the tropical downpours.

According to their ship's log, the *Ayesha* had travelled more than 600 miles since leaving the Cocos. Food supplies had shrunk considerably, and von Mücke confided to Schmidt and Gyssling that even with continued rationing the stocks would still only last a week. But the men no longer would eat the wormy rice, not because it was wormy, but because it had to be cooked in salt water. They could no longer refresh their thirst except with a single spoonful of fresh water once a day to wet their tongues that were now cracking and running blood from the lack of water.

The precious casks of water would be empty in five days, and the other water gathered from rainstorms in every conceivable utensil had already been drunk or lost by leakage and evaporation.

The sun rose each morning with a brilliance that stung the eyes and burned the body. Even the birds of the ocean, the

albatross, the tern, and the gull, disappeared from their usual station around the *Ayesha*, as the heat became unbearable. Simple duties aboard ship now became burdensome as men became too wilted to work or even to move during the heat of the day. They lay sprawled on deck beneath canvas, saving their energy for essential tasks like eating. Fishing over the sides was now the exclusive duty of only six men, and days would go by without a single fish being caught.

But if the heat of the day was exhausting, the nights were filled with terror, as thousands of cockroaches marched on the crew, and made life absolutely unbearable. Some men were so weakened by lack of food and water that they were unable to ward off the attacks, and soon their bodies were marked by long ugly scars and running sores. Von Mücke continued the system of watches, dividing his crew into the regulation three watches, with orders to each to look for clouds, man the impossible pumps in the unbearable heat of the hold, keep the decks clean, and kill as many cockroaches as possible. Keeping the decks sterile with sea water was a necessity as the crew was now suffering the ravages of dysentery. Those who appeared to be in danger of death were permitted small portions of seltzer water to relieve their fevers. Von Mücke mentioned in his diary that he was living with a crew of skeletons.

Yet, he himself had managed to remain in good physical shape, and he moved among the men at all hours of the day and night. "Steady lads," he would say. "We'll be in Padang in a day or so, even if we have to row the rest of the way."

He would, in fact, have placed a crew in the ship's boats to row the *Ayesha*, but the men were all too exhausted. Had the rains continued he would have attempted to row his way to Sumatra. Von Mücke was tough and stubborn, and he intended to get to safety no matter what the cost. Then, on November 20, a break came. The becalmed *Ayesha* stirred to a slight wind. Von Mücke found only six men fit enough to climb the rigging and haul the ropes to get the ship under way before the resurgent trades. But they achieved it — and she began to move — slowly at first, and then, quickened by the mounting wind, started to slice the water at ten knots.

Von Mücke estimated the distance to the Sumatra coastline

at no more than 60 miles. With the breeze came the long swells of the ocean, and soon the *Ayesha* began to roll slowly from side to side as she caught the swells on her starboard beam. The crew in their weakened condition began to roll on the decks, unable to stop themselves. Those who were able to help created makeshift obstructions on the deck to stop the men from rolling into the sea.

On November 22, von Mücke broke open several more bottles of seltzer, as he expected to reach Sumatra within the week. If he failed to raise the coast, death would be the victor. Not a single ship was sighted; no sail, no fisherman. Nothing but blue glass on blue glass, mocking the struggle of the little ship. Water rose in the stinking hold, and the pumps now went unmanned.

On November 23, a tern appeared over the bowsprit and then wheeled away. Later, several gulls flew by, and von Mücke guessed he was closer to land than he had reckoned. On November 24, one of his crewmen, able to climb partway up the mainmast, gasped out the good news. Land ahead. Yes, there on the horizon was a dark line breaking the sea and the sky, perhaps no more than 40 miles away. It was the mountainous skyline of Sumatra, invitingly beautiful for those who could see.

By evening the *Ayesha* began to rock to high winds that turned to gale force. Scud clouds raced over the sea driving the birds before them and enveloping the *Ayesha* in beautiful rain, rain that cascaded over the decks and over the fevered bodies of the sick crewmen. It rained all night and, on the morning of November 25, the coastline was high on the horizon. Von Mücke marked on his yellow chart that the *Ayesha* had reached a position due west of Padang, a score of miles from Sumatra's offshore islands of Batu and Siberut, and was heading for a channel between the islands known as the Seaflower Channel. In the long chain of offshore islands, the *Ayesha* was moving into a channel only two islands removed from Simalur where the *Emden* had coaled, and lain unobserved during her initial run to the Bay of Bengal.

But the winds were changing. The *Ayesha* began to drift too far east, and the crew was unable to man the sails sufficiently to counter this strong movement of sea and air. An offshore

breeze then sprang up, and the next day the islands appeared to be getting more distant. That night the Padang light blinked teasingly on the horizon. Von Mücke decided to lower the boats the next morning and attempt to row to the distant land.

One of his men offered him a cigarette made of dried tea leaves and paper to help him compose his thoughts. "Bah, the devil's welcome to it," he choked and the sailors laughed. At dawn there was no breeze and the jolly boats were lowered. Ten men were assigned to each; they hitched on to the *Ayesha* and began to row, inch by inch, toward the shore. They made little progress, but during the heat of the day they were surprised and pleasantly startled to see the smoke of a ship driving toward them. All eyes stared at her as she moved closer and closer at a rapid speed. She turned out to be the Dutch destroyer *Lynx*, and without signal she crossed the stern of the *Ayesha* at 500 yards. She made no move to come closer as the wind increased and shoved the *Ayesha* toward the rising coast. That night the *Lynx*'s green and red running lights could be clearly seen, circling at 200 yards around the *Ayesha*. Next morning she was still there and von Mücke signalled her with flags: WHY ARE YOU FOLLOWING ME? There was no reply. But soon after, a Malay sail-boat ran out to the *Ayesha*, and a pilot boarded her, offering to guide her through the dangerous channels to Padang for a fee. Von Mücke promised that the German Consul in Padang would gladly pay the harbour fee, and after considerable argument the pilot agreed to guide her.

Now the *Lynx* came alongside, and the commander shouted through a megaphone that if the *Ayesha* and her crew entered Padang they would be interned.

"My crew is dying; we need help not a prison camp," von Mücke angrily replied. "Get a message to the German Consul and tell him the *Emden*'s crew has arrived. We need food and clothing and medical supplies . . . quickly."

The *Lynx* closed in. Over the side came bars of soap, food, medicine, and the cheers of the Dutch crewmen. They knew that it was a miracle the Germans were alive. The British, the French, the Russians and the Australians had been hunting them for weeks, and had finally given them up for dead — yet miraculously, here they were. A huge pot of meat stew was

hauled over the side, and the men wolfed it down. The Dutch officers were friendly, but kept their distance as their wireless crackled out questions to the Padang Naval Authority. Small sail-boats now clustered around the *Ayesha*. Natives, especially the fishermen, plied the crew with fresh fruit. Hundreds of curious Sumatrans waved and sang and laughed at the bronzed nakedness of the Germans.

But despite the cheering, the Dutch refused to permit von Mücke and the *Ayesha* to enter harbour under threat of internment. Not wishing to tangle with the British or the Germans, and to stray beyond their ideas of International Law, the Duteh kept the *Ayesha* outside the harbour, despite the protests of the German consular officials. The Dutch believed that the German crew should be treated as escaped British prisoners, and thus subject to laws that would cause them to be interned for the remainder of the war.

Informed by the German Consulate of the circumstances, von Mücke invited the Dutch officials to the ship and displayed the arms and ammunition and machine-guns mounted on deck. He proclaimed the *Ayesha* to be a ship of war. This would, under the rules of International Law, permit him to enter a neutral harbour for supplies, provided he left within 48 hours. The Dutch waved aside his arguments and refused to let the men ashore, but they permitted local Germans to bring food and clothing to the crew, and the port doctor came aboard to help.

From the German Consul at Padang, von Mücke and his officers learned the fate of von Müller and the sailors who had been captured. They had last been reported in Ceylon while being transferred to British ships for an unknown destination. On December 2 the *Emden* prisoners reached Port Said with the Australian convoy. It would be the parting of the ways for the Germans and their Anzac captors. The Germans would live the rest of the war in prison camps, while the hardy Anzacs would soon inscribe their names on an appalling casualty list in the Gallipoli campaign.

Under armed guard, because the British feared his trickery, von Müller and his crew had been removed from the Australian ship at night and placed upon the escort cruiser *Hampshire*,

which had joined the convoy at Aden, having spent the opening months of the war hunting down the elusive *Emden*. (She was the same *Hampshire* that was to sink in the North Sea on June 5, 1916, carrying the great Lord Kitchener to his death.)

On December 6 the *Hampshire* arrived at Malta, where the British had taken great pains to force absolute security around the port. Von Müller's whereabouts was to be kept a closely-guarded secret, and he was personally escorted by a heavy armoured guard to a waiting lorry at the dockside and driven to the grim rock-hewn prison of Verdala. The crew was removed on foot to the prison at Fort Salvatore.

The British were convinced that von Müller was super-human, and might someday escape to return to Germany and plague them once again. They made sure that all windows of his prison were boarded up on the seaward side, so that he would never be able to see the naval strength of the harbour, nor the build-up of strategic war supplies for the forthcoming Turkish and Arab campaigns.

Von Müller was given no news of the war whatsoever. When he asked questions about it, he was politely ignored. He attempted on many occasions to learn the whereabouts of von Mücke and the Direction Island party, but was turned down. Newspapers were forbidden him. He was treated as an ordinary prisoner of war, under heavy security.

Back in Padang harbour, von Mücke realized that he too would be a prisoner of war if he didn't move fast. Already the Dutch had broadcast that the *Emden* escapees had arrived in their harbour, and the British had dispatched from Singapore a number of destroyers to intercept them. The German Consul informed von Mücke that the *Choising*, a 1,700-ton North-German-Lloyd ship, was lying 200 miles west of Sumatra. She had failed to locate the *Emden* in the Palau after a zig-zag run with supplies from Manila, and then had slipped through the southern islands, continuing the search without success. Von Mücke asked the consul to radio the *Choising*, instructing her to make for Sumatra Head; he would intercept her if she would cruise south-eastward along the coast, keeping as close to shore as possible. She received the signal, and headed under forced draught for the coastal waters.

Heavy rains and dense fog banks slowed down the *Choising*, but the combination of elements undoubtedly saved her from being sighted and destroyed by British warships. Her union with the *Ayesha* was dramatic – she almost ran the sailing vessel down in the fog.

Von Mücke sank the *Ayesha* by opening her sea cocks and, as senior officer, took command of the *Choising*. Holding a council-of-war, it was decided to take the vessel across the Indian Ocean to the Red Sea, moor in an Arab port friendly to the Germans, then formulate plans for a return to Germany. It was a bold and dangerous plan.

But von Mücke had a few tricks up his sleeve. He changed the name of the *Choising* to the *Shenir*, of Genoa. Overnight the name *Shenir* appeared on her bows, and with an Italian flag at her masthead, he sailed her right through the centre of the British trade routes. Then she headed westward toward Ceylon on a new adventure.

Arabian Odyssey

With the *Emden* campaign satisfactorily ended, Winston Churchill and the Admiralty had decided on a bold plan to end, once and for all, the threat of von Spee's Far Eastern Squadron. After Coronel, von Spee had sunk a number of British merchantmen, and had created sufficient fear and confusion along the South American coasts to prevent neutrals from venturing from their ports.

Under orders so secret that only two or three others knew of the plan, Churchill ordered Admiral Sir Frederick Charles Doveton Sturdee, newly created Commander-in-Chief of the South Atlantic and South Pacific, to sail south and intercept von Spee. His order was: "Seek out and destroy the enemy." To make sure of Sturdee's naval superiority, Churchill broke his own ruling, and removed England's latest and most powerful battlecruisers from their vital North Sea stations. They were the *Invincible* and the *Inflexible*. They could outrace and outshoot any other warship in the world.

Keeping to the middle of the ocean, so as not to be sighted and identified, the two ships raced southward to the Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic, to coal before searching out von Spee. But von Spee himself came to the Falklands, unaware that the tripod masts lying on the harbour behind the hills were cloaking two ships that could each fire 5,000 pounds of high-velocity shells at one blast, and could pinpoint their destructive force to within a few yards at 15,000 yards.

When he discovered their identity von Spee turned and ran.

A commander like von Müller might have tried to force the harbour because both battlecruisers were coaling and had their steam down. But von Spee was not von Müller, and he ordered his squadron to scatter and race to the protection of the high seas. Admiral Sturdee continued his breakfast while his ships were coaled and steam was being raised in the boilers. He then charged out of Port Stanley harbour, gave chase, and systematically erased the *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau*, *Leipzig*, and the *Nürnberg*, and the Battle of the Falkland Islands was over. The *Dresden* and the *Prinz Eitel Friederich* escaped for the moment, but von Spee had gone to the bottom with most of his men. From this moment on, Britain was undisputed ruler of the seas.

Far away from the dreadful slaughter of the Falklands, Helmuth von Mücke and his men were unaware of the death of von Spee, and the destruction of the Far Eastern Squadron. Nor could they know that with the exception of the *Dresden* (now in the South Pacific, but soon to die off Juan de Fernandez Island), they themselves were the last remaining members of that gallant company of adventurers who had set off from Tsingtao a few short months before.

Ahead of them stretched the almost limitless expanse of the Indian Ocean, divided at the northern end by the Indian peninsula into two great basins of commerce, the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. Von Mücke intended to sail the *Shenir* across the mouth of the Bay of Bengal to Ceylon, and then to steer boldly into the busy sea lanes that linked the ports of Bengal to the port of Aden at the mouth of the Arabian Sea. Who would ever suspect, he wrote in his diary, that the lowly Italian tramp steamer with its Chinese and Malayan crew would be concealing the much-sought sailors from the *Emden*. To further avert suspicion, it was necessary for him to proceed via the busiest of routes, reasonably secure in the knowledge that Italy's neutrality at this critical stage of European wartime diplomacy would protect the *Shenir*. The German sailors were kept below decks when they were in the proximity of other ships.

It actually took von Mücke until Christmas, 1914, to close the distance from Sumatra to Ceylon, and this was accomplished without incident. The men were kept busy, mostly at drilling

on deck and constant exercising. Regular religious services were now held twice each Sunday, instead of only in the morning, to keep up the morale of sailors who had been isolated at sea ever since leaving the German Pacific islands. (There had been several outbreaks of homosexuality aboard the *Shenir* which had been ruthlessly put down.) Von Mücke, guided by the German doctor, Hans Luther, who had joined the *Shenir* at Padang, kept the men busy during the daylight hours mainly to keep them fit and tired. He knew the problem of trying to keep his men morally upright after so many months of loneliness, and he worked them almost ruthlessly. Christmas was the occasion to break open extra beer. There was plenty aboard, and the party was a gay one, considering the circumstances. The band no longer existed, but the choir had developed very well, and carol singing took up much of the day.

After reaching Ceylon, the men knew it was necessary to be especially alert, as ships were steaming on all sides as far as the eye could see. Great convoys protected by cruisers moved onward from Ceylon and India. Scores of merchantmen crossed and criss-crossed the sea, but not one signalled or challenged the *Shenir*. There was little interest in Italians on the high seas, it seemed.

On one afternoon after the year 1915 had begun, a British cruiser passed a scant quarter mile from the *Shenir*, and a flag greeting was returned by von Mücke, who had grown a moustache to look like an Italian. He had also blackened his blond hair with coal-dust, as had other members of the crew whose duties kept them on deck. When an occasion such as this arose, all Chinese and Malayans were called to deck duties while Germans manned the stations below.

Von Mücke knew that when the cruiser passed by, his bridge and decks would be carefully scanned by British binoculars (made in Germany), and he was ready and alert for any such occasion. A challenge could have ended the career of the *Emden*'s men, but no challenge ever came. The British by this time had come to the conclusion that they had gone down with the *Ayesha*. The interrogation of witnesses at Padang also appeared to support the theory that the *Ayesha* had foundered somewhere off Sumatra. The British must have

known of the presence in Sumatran waters of the *Choising* (now the *Shenir*) but apparently they never linked her with the disappearance of the *Emden*'s sailors.

It was not until mid-January that the *Shenir* came in sight of the coast of Arabia. The crew had lost all track of time. They had been at sea so long that they were numbed by sun and sky and water, and the heat was appalling and unrelenting.

Von Mücke took the *Shenir* into the Gulf of Aden, which was teeming with enemy shipping. He passed close to the port of Aden, sailing right under the noses of scores of British and Allied warships. Not a single challenge was hurled at the *Shenir* as she moved slowly south-west from Aden, keeping close to the South Arabian coast, around the headland of Bandar at Tawahi, onward to the strait of Bab al Mandab between the Arabian peninsula of Turbah on the right, and the coastline of French Somaliland on the left.

At this point, von Mücke admitted he didn't exactly know what he was going to do. It seemed that the best plan would be to sail on to the Yemen port of Al Hudaydah (Hodeida), contact the German consulate in that busy port city in the Red Sea, and make arrangements to go overland to reach the head of the railroad to Berlin. It seemed feasible at the time. Events would soon prove otherwise.

Keeping close to shore the *Shenir* passed by the busy port of Mocha, sailed by the imposing minaret at the harbour entrance, passed the decaying fleet of fishing boats and a British destroyer moored in the roads. Al Hudaydah was only 125 miles further along the coast. It was a port where British ships were not welcome during this early stage of the First World War. British agents were active with Arab tribes, particularly those across the lofty coastal mountains that surrounded Al Hudaydah. But generally, the Germans were the best liked Europeans in Yemen. They were good customers for wool and Mocha coffee, and prompt in payment. They had further distinguished themselves by helping to establish first-aid hostels, as well as assisting the revitalization of the Red Sea fishing fleets.

The *Shenir* moved toward the narrow and shallow harbour of the bustling port, but even with her shallow draught she

was unable to moor in the inner harbour. Instead, von Mücke anchored her in the roads, just outside the port entrance. With a dozen sailors he went ashore in one of the boats and made his way through the crowded dusty streets to the German Embassy. Bedouins dressed in colourful rags, many of them carrying curved daggers and Lee Enfield .303 rifles, jostled through the crowds on the narrow avenues. The German consulate was distinguished by the eagle, emblazoned on its mud walls. Von Mücke entered gaily, asked for the consul and, when ushered into his presence, announced: "I am Kapitänleutnant von Mücke of His Majesty's ship *Emden*."

The consul staggered back weeping and talking incoherently. He couldn't believe his eyes or ears. Two other Germans in the office ran to grab von Mücke's hand. "Mein Gott, it is incredible, unbelievable," gasped the consul. "You are supposed to be dead! I'll wire Berlin immediately."

In Berlin the Kaiser could not believe that von Mücke and the raiding party had survived. He believed it to be a British trick, and the wires sang with messages in an effort to establish the facts. When it was at long last certain that von Mücke and his men were alive and healthy, the Kaiser announced the good news to his General Staff, and great rejoicing took place in all of Germany. The British in Aden immediately placed a price on von Mücke's head and on that of every member of the *Emden*'s crew. The price was in silver, in a land where blood-letting was the order of the day. "You are in danger," von Mücke was informed by the German Consul. "You have embarrassed the English in Arabia, but Arabs love heroes."

It seems so strange, in this hot and humid land where illiteracy and ignorance were almost total, that the names of von Mücke and the *Emden* were known, but it was so. When the news of the arrival swept the city, there was great rejoicing in the streets. The remaining officers and crew were borne ashore and treated to the delights of the Arabian Nights.

How to get back to Germany was von Mücke's immediate problem. Now that the British knew that the *Emden*'s crew was in Arab territory it was impossible to continue along the Arabian shore in the *Shenir*. Already the British at Aden had dispatched two cruisers to lie off Al Hudaydah to seize the

Shenir as soon as she cleared port. Meanwhile the British agents again attempted to bribe the Arabian tribesmen to slaughter the *Emden*'s crew, but without success. None among the hero-worshippers of Hudaydah proved willing to slit the Germans' throats.

Several days later, however, the British believed they had the Germans trapped, whether they travelled by sea or by the ancient land routes that snaked through the mountain barriers along the Arabian coast, or the impossible camel caravan routes that traversed the great desert to the Persian Gulf (the area known as Rub' al Khali – the Empty Quarter). With money received from the German consulate, von Mücke bought camels, supplies of food, and casks of water. He planned to go overland to Yemen's walled capital of Sana and then trek across the hot Arabian desert to Baghdad in temperatures that ran as high as 130 degrees.

The way to Sana was one of the world's oldest caravan routes, twisting over mountains and rocky headlands, over tormented earth and sand from the port to Abmadi to Ubal, to Manakha, and over the 13,000-foot ranges into the walled city of Sana. It was hardly better than a goat path, twisting and turning every few feet, up and down over rock and gravel, baked by heat and dominated by the flies and the crawling creatures which erupted when the night cooled the parched land. It was only 85 miles, but it would take many days to traverse. But von Mücke was determined, and the *Emden* group, together with several other Germans from the *Shenir*, took off from Al Hudaydah, cheered on their way by the shouts and oriental music of the Arabs. Choking dust mingled with the stench of camels and almost overpowered the men. Flies were everywhere, and the camels, always belligerent, refused to follow the guttural commands of the party. The ten Arabs who had been hired as drivers had great difficulty in keeping the caravan intact. Seven days later, almost broken in mind and spirit, the Germans slogged over a divide of strewn boulders to see the walled-city of Sana, looming sunwashed against the blue-grey mountain wall on its southern side. Its seven wooden gates were open; Sana was expecting the German heroes – and thousands flocked from the city to herald their arrival.

The sailors were carried into the city on the shoulders of bearded tribesmen who grinned and shouted, danced and screamed. Von Mücke and his officers were wined and dined, while the crew again tasted the not-so-mysterious mysteries of the east. But through all the gaiety von Mücke was thinking quietly. He had made a mistake. It had taken him an entire week to travel eighty miles. He could never hope to traverse a thousand miles of desert to Baghdad. He was advised to return to Al Hudaydah. Since the British believed them to be heading overland, it might be advisable for them to slip back and return to the sea.

The sobering thought of again climbing the old caravan route through the towering passes of the Jabal Nuqum mountains was enough to break the morale of the tired sailors, but it was quite apparent to von Mücke, after consultations with the desert sheiks of the district, that a trek overland to Baghdad was impossible. Thus, it was decided to return to Al Hudaydah.

During the night of February 1, von Mücke on a camel led his men through the narrow mud streets to the main gate of the sleeping city, the gate of Bab al-Yemen. As was the custom in Sana, the city gates were closed each night at ten o'clock and heavily guarded until dawn. This night, however, under secret orders, the main gate was noiselessly opened to permit the Germans to move from the city. As arranged, they would join a large camel caravan outside the gates and, flanked by the animals of the caravan, would travel back to Al Hudaydah. The plan worked perfectly. British agents in Sana were not aware of the exodus; when they did learn two days later that von Mücke and his men had departed, they were led to believe they had started on their publicized overland trek to Baghdad.

The Germans arrived back in Al Hudaydah without fanfare, entering the city at night, and were then secreted in the German consulate and in the homes of German nationals. But von Mücke could not stay in the port, and British cruisers were moored outside the harbour watching the *Shenir*. He recalled the words of the sheik of Sana: "You would be wise, O seafarer, to travel by small watercraft along the Red Sea shore to beyond Mecca and then join a caravan to Damascus." This seemed to be good

advice; but where could they get enough boats to take half a hundred men safely for more than 600 miles to Mecca, and perhaps for hundreds of miles beyond?

After several days in Al Hudaydah it was no longer possible to keep the men confined, and the British learned that the Germans were back. British agents began working to stop the Germans from making any boat purchases. This was not a difficult task, since the Arabs, though they liked the Germans better than the English, did not trust the German Mark. Weeks went by. Then German diplomacy went to work to help the stranded men. The Turkish Government was approached by Berlin and quietly purchased two Arab sambuks of 25 tons each. They secretly informed von Mücke of the purchase and asked him where he wanted the boats to pick him up. Von Mücke and the German Consul decided the best place would be at some remote location within walking distance of Al Hudaydah. The date was set, and the sambuks set out from the upper Red Sea for the small port village of Jebaua, ten miles up the Red Sea shore from Al Hudaydah. Meanwhile, von Mücke and his party were to slip out of the city at night and travel light to Jebaua.

No camels would be used for this quick trip. Machine-guns, ammunition, food and water would be carried on mules. The Germans would leave Al Hudaydah at midnight, expecting to reach Jebaua in four hours and be at sea by dawn, hugging the mountainous coastline as the Arab fishermen were wont to do. On the night of March 13, the Germans in small groups, and dressed like Bedouins, passed through the red-mud gates on the north side of the city and headed swiftly along a coastal caravan route for the ten-mile hike. The British had been watching the Germans, waiting for just such a move, but they guessed wrongly that von Mücke and his men were travelling to Mecca overland rather than by sea. Tribes which had been brought in to harass the German party with .303 bullets found only empty trails.

The road to Jebaua, too, was little more than a rocky foot-path. The Germans did not reach Jebaua in four hours; they reached it at dawn after a back-breaking trek. There, at their moorings at an old dock of the village, were the two sambuks; stout boats, 50 feet long and 14 feet wide but tricky to

manoeuvre. The Arabs could handle them with ease, but the German sailors found them almost unmanageable. Twelve Arabs were assigned to each sambuk and von Mücke divided his men, half to each boat. While a British-paid cut-throat watched the departure from a rocky crag above, the Arab sailors chanted *Allah Akbar* ("God is greatest"), and the ships moved snail-like along the shore, keeping just far enough to sea to avoid the tremendous boulders and rocky outcroppings that erupted or were concealed just under the surface of the water.

The sea route toward Mecca was laced with hundreds of small islands and uncharted reefs and rocks, which made sailing slow and difficult during the day and almost impossible by night. But anxious to reach Mecca's Red Sea port of Jiddah as soon as possible, von Mücke forced the Arabs to sail at night by keeping well out to sea beyond the visible rocks and islands. On the third night out a violent Red Sea storm, typical of storms in that area at this time of year, swept inland from the south-east with hurricane violence. The sails were torn asunder, and the ships scurried before the giant rollers like leaves on the surface of a stream. For two days the Arabs and the Germans battled the storm. Then the first sambuk struck hidden rocks and began to take in water. Von Mücke and his sailors were flung with great violence into the storm-tossed waters. Some managed to fling their machine-guns and ammunition atop the rocks, but food and fresh water was lost. The Arab sailors died in the attempt to save their stricken ship, while the second sambuk raced to her side in a vain attempt to rescue them. It took a full day just to rescue the Germans from the rocks, with superb manoeuvring of the remaining sambuk by the Arab crew. Some Germans were lost in the struggle, and now there were some sixty men jammed in one sambuk, which tossed like a cork in swirling tides and furious cross currents.

The next day the skies cleared and the sea settled somewhat, permitting the Germans to dry their ammunition and clean their machine-guns and rifles of salt water and sand. But there were too many men in one boat, and the Arab sailors and the Germans knew that another storm of the same intensity would destroy them all. Von Mücke wrote in his diary this wonderful phrase: "I have had better voyages."

At the town of Konfida, von Mücke moored the remaining sambuk and went ashore for water. He was in for a pleasant surprise, the best surprise since he had arrived in Arabia.

There had arrived the same day at Konfida a handsome young Arab named Sami Bey, an agent of the Turkish Government; spy, guide, procurer, cook, diplomat, and liar, all rolled into one smiling package. Believing that the Germans would win the war, he was more than anxious to lend his services. He agreed to lead the expedition up the coast, and with his persuasive power was able to purchase an Arab lateen-rigged scow, while von Mücke agreed to carry on with the remaining sambuk. Sami Bey moved his tents and his two servants to the scow, and then shocked everyone because he had with him his 17-year-old bride with whom he had sexual relations in plain sight of the sex-starved German crew. However, there was solace in the fact that when Sami Bey slept at night, the young bride would steal into the arms of waiting bluejackets. Although there is no record of the number of German sailors who accepted her favours it would not be hard to believe that all twenty-two of the men on the scow were grateful to their "Scheherazade."

At the city of Al Lith, some 400 miles up from Al Hudaydah, Sami Bey learned that the British had lost track of the Germans in the storm, but had assigned a destroyer and three gunboats to keep up the search and had been sighted several times searching the shore waters between Al Lith and Jiddah. It appeared certain that they could not continue on the sea route, and von Mücke, with Sami Bey's accord, elected to go overland again, this time on the tortuous caravan route from Al Lith to Jiddah. From a tent headquarters outside the walled city the Germans bought and traded for camels and supplies. Al Lith sheiks promised on an oath to Allah that von Mücke and his men would not be waylaid on their journey, and they further promised so seek the support of tribes along the route to protect them.

Von Mücke had no sooner made his decision than veiled riders slipped into the night to inform the British at Jiddah. Von Mücke would be in grave danger, and at least a dozen of his men were ill and unfit to travel. One had already died that day of typhoid fever.

The Happy Return

It was almost the end of March, 1915, nearly five months since the odyssey of the *Emden*'s raiding party began at the Cocos Islands. During that long interval, the Germans had sailed and walked and swayed to the jarring rhythm of camels and mules over 6,000 miles of sea and sand.

They were now on the old caravan route to Jiddah with a dozen camels and a small pack of mules, all carrying supplies and the heavy machine-guns, and there was only one tent to shade the sick from the dreadful heat of the sun that sent temperatures as high as 135 degrees. Each German carried a rifle and a small pack of ammunition. Six armed Arabs had joined their party, paid by the Turks, and sworn to protect the Germans against all dangers on the journey. They would soon be needed. During the heat of the day the men rested under any shelter they could find, usually rock outcroppings along the cobblestone trails. At night they could move only a few feet at a time because of the treacherous pathways. Almost all the movement along the route was accomplished shortly after dawn and during the twilight hours of each morning. But more and more of the sailors were falling ill. They could not eat, and water was forced into their broken lips by their fellow travellers.

After two days on the trail, a dozen camels were driven to their noon-time camp by a young Arab girl by the name of Setta, the wife of a local sheik, who had been paid by the Turks to provide more camels to the Germans. It was apparent that

Setta was as rough as the drovers. She was a crack rifleman and could slit a throat with great dexterity. She was also young, not more than nineteen, and attractive. She warned von Mücke in broken French that the district swarmed with brigands, and that they must take steps to protect their camp day and night and to set up scouts and rearguards during each day's march.

On the evening of April 1 the men were too tired to move further. Their eyes were red-rimmed and aching, their tongues thick with a yellow coating, and their lungs burning with sharp bolts of fire caused by the desert heat. Von Mücke agreed to stop. He had been pressing forward because the sick were getting worse and the able becoming weaker. The camp was made on a ridge with high hills to the left (southern) side, and long rolling valleys to the east, north and west. The tent of the sick, as it had come to be called, was set in the centre of a circle. The jars of water were buried in the sand next to the tent, and in a circle next to the water jugs were the boxes of ammunition and food. The Germans rested and slept in the third circle about 20 feet in depth, and next to them came the Arab drovers and armed guards. On the outside perimeter lay the camels and the tethered mules.

As soon as the camp was established, several hard biscuits were served to the men and a cup of brackish water filled out the night's allotment. Those unable to eat gave their hard biscuits to the healthy. The Arabs required little water and carried their own supply in goatskins. They nibbled at hard loaves of bread which they kept wrapped in dirty cloths, suspended from their gun belts. Von Mücke had set up a system of watches, as if the Germans were on board ship with an officer in charge of each watch. The guard duty was assigned to three Arab "gendarmes" (as they liked to be known), with two Bedouins and two Germans in charge. Their main job was to listen for sounds in the silence of these desert wastes. This night one of the Arab guards was resting on the butt of his rifle when he lifted his head suddenly and let a hiss escape from his tight lips. No one moved. All ears were tuned to the desert. From the distance came a shout, an Arab oath. Then there was silence again. Suddenly over the rim of a great dune to the

west appeared an uneven line of camels, with riders on their backs — riders with rifles.

The line moved into the darkness of the shallow valley below the encampment. There was a crackle of rifle fire. Bullets whizzed through the air. A camel bellowed, a Bedouin guard doubled up in pain, and the entire camp immediately erupted into bedlam. Von Mücke moved quickly. As Setta instructed the Arab guards, von Mücke ordered his men to move cases of food around the sick to protect them from the hail of bullets whizzing sporadically through the air. There were at least 300 in the raiding party, Setta yelled to von Mücke. Rod Schmidt was setting up the machine-guns, instruments which the Arabs had never before seen; they were soon to take a bloody toll.

There was a rush of bandits against the outer perimeter. Three gendarmes fell to the ground. One or two of the Germans were shot, others were injured, but the attack was driven back by the machine-guns and rapid-fire rifle shots. Schmidt stood up to give a command and fell to the sand with a bullet in his chest. Again the cut-throats attacked with wild yells, and again they were beaten down with bullets as Setta, seemingly invulnerable, fired her rifle into the pack, yelling and screaming as she did. She had torn off her veil in the fight, and she moved in among the dead and dying camels to get better shots at the enemy. Brave Rod Schmidt died in von Mücke's arms; his long journey back had ended here on a filthy blood-spattered hill in the land of nowhere.

There was a lull; Setta moved beyond the wall of bawling camels and shouted in Arabic into the darkness. There was an answering shout, and she disappeared into the darkness toward the invaders. Her shouts could be heard again, and she was at once recognized by the bandits as the wife of the strongest sheik in the district, a sheik with much influence and many men. They listened as she screamed and cursed and spat at them. Von Mücke and the others strengthened the fortifications by scooping up mounds of sand, making protective hills and shallow trenches for the sick and wounded and for themselves.

Meanwhile Setta continued to bargain. The bandits would not harm her, she knew. If they so much as touched a hair on her head, her husband would hunt them down to the last man.

Besides, her husband controlled many of the wells in the district, and death would come to the first man who touched a well if he was not on friendly terms with the sheik. After almost two hours of parleying, she returned to the camp. The fortifications had been strengthened greatly. The dead were buried, and their graves had been obliterated in the sand so that the Arabs would not find them later and hack them to pieces as was their custom.

She told von Mücke that the raiders wanted money and all the arms and ammunition.

"They cannot have the arms and ammunition," replied von Mücke. "Go back and tell them that when we arrive in Jiddah we will give them money, but not before. Tell them we are famous Germans, and if anything happens to us they will be hunted down and killed like hyenas."

Setta, rifle in her hand, disappeared in the darkness, shouting as she made her way to the enemy camp, so that she would not be the victim of a bullet in the dark. She told them of von Mücke's counter-terms and the arguing lasted the night. Dawn was lighting the sky when she returned. When confronted by von Mücke she simply threw up her hands; the talks and the threats had been useless. So von Mücke alerted his men that more attacks would be forthcoming.

At this time the Germans still had their two machine-guns, twenty-nine rifles, eight thousand rounds of light ammunition, and ten cases of machine-gun clips. Now entrenched behind sand walls, they were powerful adversaries, and had the slight advantage of being encamped on a slight rise in the sand which forced the attackers to ride uphill into their guns.

The sun moved higher into the sky. There was not a breath of air; the temperature had already reached 115 degrees, and the wounded cried for water. There were six casks left, and von Mücke permitted the sick and wounded to have a full cupful. If he was to lose the battle, why should the Arabs have the precious supply.

At 8.30 a.m. the attack began. It opened with the appearance of a lone rider on a white Arabian stallion racing across the sandy valley to the upland wall ahead of the entrenched Germans. He threw a small bomb which exploded harmlessly 20

yards in front of the line of dead camels. The live animals being held by their drivers reared with fright, and for a second it appeared they would stampede. And low ahead on the ridge 200 yards to the north-west the line of mounted cut-throats waited impatiently for the order to charge. It came. *Allah Akhbar!* and the roar of the camels' and horses' hooves joined the din of the shouting and screaming of the attackers, as the dust cloud mounted behind their ranks.

German machine-guns cut them down like wheat before the storm. Camels and horses fell to the rough ground, screaming and kicking as German bullets tore into them. The bandit rifle fire was poor, and only minor wounds were reported among the defenders. Unfortunately only one small roll of bandage remained; the scissors were missing, and the first-aid kit had been chewed by bullets. The raid wavered, and the Arabs retreated 100 yards, re-formed and charged again, this time reaching the wall of defenders. Some of them burst through into the centre, firing rifles and brandishing their curved swords. Germans and Arabs fell in the struggle. Rifles were red hot from firing, but the German bayonets drove the attackers back.

The wounded were again crying for water, and von Mücke permitted the last cask to be broached. It was for the wounded only. The Arab drivers would have to fend for themselves. They did. They cut the throats of their camels and drank the yellow water contained in their stomachs. "*Mein Gott*, these men can stand anything," wrote von Mücke, who, with Gyssling, was sickened by the sight. Dr. Luther distributed half a tin cupful to the wounded. The others would have to suffer. The sun rose higher, and the temperature was up to 125 degrees.

After this attack, the Arab brigands withdrew to the crest of the distant hill and remained there during the day, planning the next strategy. Von Mücke and Gyssling improved their defence perimeter. Half the men slept, while the others lay under any type of meagre shade that could be found to await the next attack. It did not come that day. At night, the overpowering stench of the dead camels and mules drew hundreds of hyenas to the scene, to tear at the decomposing animal bodies. Their eyes shone like humans, and the German defenders shot at them, thinking they were Arabs. It was hard on the nerves,

peering into the blackness, seeing a pair of eyes, firing the rifle, and finding that it was only a hyena which had been hit.

The third day of the battle began with the waving of white flags from the enemy ridge. Again, Setta went over the barricade to negotiate. This time the bandits demanded only money.

"Bullets are our answer . . . German bullets," shouted von Mücke.

"*Beaucoup du combat*" (lots of fight), retorted the Bedouin, who was looking for a way to end the fight, or perceive the state of affairs within the camp and start the fight over again. Von Mücke kept him at some distance, so that all he could see was the line of pointing rifles and the two machine-guns, shining in the heat of the sun.

"Go ahead and fight," laughed von Mücke, who was as anxious to end hostilities as the Bedouin. The mood of his own men could be described as dismal. The water was almost all consumed. The food had turned bad, and there seemed no hope if the Bedouins continued to attack.

At ten o'clock, when the shouting between von Mücke and the Arab leader seemed on the point of ending, a near-miracle occurred. There bobbed up on a northern rim of rocks, two miles away, two camel riders carrying white pennants.

Two members of the bandit tribe had spied them first and they shouted to their leader. All eyes turned to the distant specks as they rode down the sandhill into a ravine where they disappeared for several minutes and reappeared again, riding straight for the German camp. Then, while still half a mile away, loping toward the battle-line, there appeared over the same distant rim a long line of camel troops, more than 100, their white banners snapping as they rode into the valley and toward von Mücke. They drew rapidly nearer, while the bandit leader turned quickly and raced to his camp. In less than a minute his Bedouins dissolved into a dust cloud to the south.

The picturesque camel train arrived before von Mücke. They were troops of the Emir of Mecca, immaculately dressed in their flowing robes of white, their leather gun belts over their shoulders, their turbans of many colours shining like rainbows. They embraced the Germans, laughing and singing and shouting. They had food with them and water. The danger to von

Mücke was over, and his men laughed and wept and danced in the sun for joy, their bearded faces alight behind the grime and the heavy perspiration that coursed down their beards and over the half-naked bodies, black from the sun and filthy from the dirt of the desert.

But how did this troop of soldiers know of von Mücke's plight? When Setta had been negotiating with the bandits during her first visit to their camp, she realized the almost hopeless role she was playing. She luckily recognized a Bedouin lad of twelve years of age whose family had been members of her husband's camp, a lad who had worked for her on a number of occasions. Unobserved by the bandits while they discussed her threats and terms, she slipped the boy a silver coin and asked him to bring help from Mecca. That night the lad stole one of the Arabian horses and galloped to Jiddah. After a long argument with the Jiddah constables about the reasons for his presence on an Arabian stallion, he was escorted to the Governor, to whom he poured out the story of the desert battle. The Governor at once telegraphed the Emir of Mecca, who sent his two sons, his personal physician, and the camel troops to save the heroes.

The battle was now over. Von Mücke had lost ten of his men from disease and bullets, and six Arabs had been killed. The survivors could hardly move their pain-racked bodies. They were suffering from dysentery and malnutrition, and sores covered their flesh. They gulped down fresh water and stretched their arms and legs, preparing to travel the rest of the distance. The Arab drivers had abandoned them during the past night, and now they had to saddle the camels. As sailors, they knew how to rig a sailing ship, but not a ship of the desert. The saddles didn't fit properly, and von Mücke would not ask the Arab soldiers to help. It would have meant a loss of face. It took them most of the day just to saddle the belligerent beasts, and as evening came they started out again for Jiddah, leaving almost all of the baggage on the sand for the Bedouins to scavenge later.

Other than the discomfort of trying to ride camels on ill-fitting saddles, the long, hot trip to Jiddah was uneventful, and the Germans under their stalwart leader arrived at the gates of the busy city on the late afternoon of April 3, 1915.

The entire population of Jiddah turned out to welcome them. Thousands of chanting, singing Arabs poured from the gates as soon as the camel train appeared in sight. Great numbers of pilgrims who had journeyed to Jiddah on the next-to-last lap of their long journey to the religious city of Mecca, only fifty miles away, had heard of the *Emden*'s exploits, and they joined in the welcome. Racing across the hard ground outside the north-east walls of the busy port, they reached the German heroes, pulled them to the ground, kissed them, slapped their backs, gave them candy and perfume, and carried them on their shoulders to the city. The sound of the arrival could be heard for miles, and the Arab shouts echoed and re-echoed from the mountain walls. The German sick were transported on crude stretchers to the Emir's personal hospital, while von Mücke and Gyssling were accorded a military welcome. Long lines of cavalry and Arab camel troops pulled to attention before the palace as they were honoured by the Emir.

The Emir had read of their exploits on the *Emden*. He had followed their progress since they had arrived at Al Hudaydah, and he was overjoyed to meet them. A huge feast took place, attended by visiting sheiks and distinguished officials from the entire Middle East. Arabs, Persians, and East Indians flocked to the great celebration, while the British fumed at the impact that von Mücke and his men had made on the Arab world.

While the German sailors learned to eat mutton, rice, and nuts of pine, lathered with yogourt and butter, and drank beer and began to put on weight again, the Turkish Government, anxious to assure their restless millions they had made the best choice in allying themselves to the German cause, moved quickly to bring von Mücke and his heroes to Constantinople for a national celebration. A large sailing ship was chartered by the Turks at Jiddah, and within twenty-four hours was outfitted with supplies sufficient to take care of the Germans for their next lap of the journey up the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aquaba. It took them nineteen days to make this uneventful trip. They sailed past the city of Aquaba, and made a night landing at Elat, where they were met by a camel train under the leadership of Suleiman Pasha. Now in the land where Solomon worked his copper mines more than 3,000 years ago, the group

headed north into the desert wilderness toward the railhead at Ma'an, along the ancient caravan route from Aquaba to Medina and Damascus.

Most Arabs consider that hospitality is a sacred duty, and those accompanying the Germans showed them every courtesy on the trip, over the very route where Lawrence of Arabia would shortly lead his Arabs. Approaching the railhead at Ma'an, the caravan entered the country of the powerful and fierce-some Howeitat tribe, headed by one of the most colourful figures in Lawrence's campaign, the hawk-nosed Bedouin chief Auda abu Tayi.

Auda boasted he had killed more than three score Arabs with his bare hands, had serviced almost thirty wives, and had so many sons he had lost count. But in this land of vast silences and loneliness he had heard of von Mücke, and with a large band of colourful riders at his side he greeted the Germans, and invited them to his tents. A feast of boiled lamb and rice followed, and again the Germans were on the way. Five days after leaving Elat, they met the daily train that chuffed along the Hejaz railroad to Damascus and beyond, past the Dead Sea, north to Rabbah and Dar'a and into Damascus, on April 29.

The entire city crowded along the rail lines, and a great celebration took place as soon as the train groaned into the station. German Government officers were on hand with Turkish officials to greet the sailors. New uniforms were passed out. Scores of medals were presented to the men. When the ceremonies were finished, the train gave a whistle and travelled north and west toward Aleppo and thence over the Taurus Mountains to Constantinople.

While the train crossed this burning, rusty sea of sand and towering buttes that rose thousands of feet into the brilliant blue of the Asia Minor skies, a passenger liner named the *Lusitania* sailed from New York bound for Liverpool with 1,257 passengers and a crew of 702. Von Mücke's arrival in Constantinople on May 7 would be eclipsed in every capital of the world but Berlin and Constantinople by the tragic torpedoing of the liner.

In Constantinople, the fez-crowned heads of the Middle

East were waiting with a tremendous crowd. As von Mücke and the bluejackets stepped from the train a cry rose on every lip, "*Ach, Mücke, Mücke!*" The calls were explosive and spread along the boulevards. Hand-clapping sounded a din of rejoicing. A news correspondent described the scene:

It was no shadow of a swashbuckling sailor they were applauding, but a very live hero of flesh and blood, and for a moment all were indignant he did not stop and make a speech. He marched erectly at the head of his squad of bluejackets with Turkish cavalry and Turkish Boy Scouts marching ahead of them and at the rear. The boulevard was decked with the flags of Germany and Turkey and as the sailors approached a *shamiana*, a group of high-ranking officers stood up and saluted von Mücke's arrival. An Admiral of the German Navy clicked his heels and saluted. Von Mücke stood at attention, drew his sword to his forehead and stood still. Here was the young man who had zig-zagged over 10,000 miles of sea and sand, braving storms and blockade, desert tribes and fever, and with his men had hurried back to their nearest superior to report for duty. Tears were flowing freely. Here was von Mücke the hero, a young Teuton with courage and resourcefulness and a devotion to duty, admired as much in the countries of his enemies as in his Fatherland.

When the ceremonies ended, ceremonies that lasted two days, von Mücke with his three officers, six petty officers and thirty men headed for Berlin and more war. (The apparent discrepancy in the number of survivors was caused by the addition of the *Shenir* officers and crewmen. Ten men from the original raiding party at the Cocos had been lost on the way.)

Meanwhile, as the Berlin Express raced to the German capital, half-way around the world, Julius Lauterbach, who hadn't yet escaped from his prison in Singapore, wrote the following verse about his beloved *Emden*:

*Schiff ohne Hafen, Schiff ohne Ruh.
Fliegende, fliegende Emden Du;*

*Kannst ja nicht sterben, es jagt daher
Ewig dein Schatten über das Meer.*

(Ship without harbour, ship without rest.
Flying, flying wanderer, O *Emden* you;
Can never die, for you are destined
To follow your shadow across the seas, forever.)

24

Finale

Helmut von Mücke rapidly learned that war-time heroes are important propaganda weapons for a brief time only. Then they are sent off on other assignments and are quickly forgotten. No sooner had he been feted by the Kaiser and the Admiralty Staff than he found himself assigned to the Middle East. Back he was sent to the hated sand and heat through which he had so recently struggled. He was placed in charge of the Euphrates River torpedo and gunboat patrol, where he was to remain for the balance of the war.

In Berlin he had been unable to learn anything about von Müller. German Intelligence had little to offer on his whereabouts, but they guessed he was at Malta because the crew members were interned on the island.

And on Malta, von Müller was a sick man. He had contracted an inflammation of the lungs which was causing him great pain. The dampness of his prison cell, caused by the constant drip, drip, drip through the limestone walls, had "eaten into my bones" as he expressed it. He began to shiver; his cough worsened. He did not have sufficient clothing to ward off the clammy cold. The food at the prison was bad, and the water contained more livestock than the beef soup. It was an ironic situation for a man who had always maintained the highest standards of care for his prisoners, and had reaped world-wide praise for doing so. But in spite of being sick and constantly hungry, he worried incessantly about his men, and he started a bitter campaign against the prison authorities for permitting such conditions to exist.

In notes and in face-to-face arguments, von Müller lashed out against the prison authorities for the terrible conditions that were maintained on the island, particularly at Fort Salvatore where the *Emden*'s crew had been confined. He had first-hand knowledge of this, as he had been permitted to visit them from time to time, and to conduct religious services for them. His complaints went unanswered, until he had the chance to meet face-to-face with the Governor of the prison and the Governor of Malta. He attacked them both in no uncertain terms, warning them that when he was released he would go on a speaking campaign, if necessary, even in Britain, to inform the world of the impossible living conditions his men were enduring.

As a result of his constant threats, abetted by the fact that von Müller's name still rated high praise in England, conditions began to gradually change. The food was improved, and more and better clothing was provided. But nothing, it seems, could stop the steady drip of the water into the rocky cells, and von Müller's health worsened, as did the health of all the prisoners.

The British had no intention of antagonizing von Müller. It had been planned in the highest political and military circles to take advantage of his great popularity. He was still a hero to those who remembered him, and as the *Times* had said on an earlier occasion, "If he came to London, he would still receive a generous welcome."

The time had come for such a purposeful visit. But his health was deteriorating at an alarming rate. He had lost much weight and was suffering excruciating pain in his arm and leg joints. In early 1917 he was quietly taken from Malta and brought to England by warship. He was treated with all possible courtesy and, in great secrecy, was confined on an English estate. He was provided with a great deal of reading material, mostly political, but also laced with generous amounts of government documents and business administration material.

The British had important plans for von Müller's future. His name and influence were to be used as a rallying point for post-war Germany. What better man could they have found; a hero to every country, admired by friend and foe alike.

Germany was inexorably collapsing and would soon need an honest man, respected by both sides, to help get it back on its feet. Von Müller believed in God. He loved his fellow men. He was convinced that democracy could live with social reforms. His word was both respected and trusted.

Von Müller was now convinced that Germany was to be the loser in the war. The erosion of the German fleet, the appalling death toll of the two fronts, the stalemate in the trenches, the entry of the American troops into the war – all these things pointed to the fall of a nation which had needed a quick victory to win and had lost the initiative. He agreed to help the British in their endeavour to rebuild his country. The Republic of France, however, was not informed of this private pact.

Sometime in late January, 1918, von Müller, again in the utmost secrecy, was transferred from England to Holland, where he was openly permitted to discuss Germany's post-war future with a few influential allied leaders, as well as a number of hand-picked German moderates, some of whom had fled to Holland, and others who were prisoners-of-war like himself.

At this time, the German Government bestowed on von Müller one of its highest awards, the Cross of Merit (*Pour le Mérité*), and it was soon after this that the British released him from the status of prisoner-of-war and helped him to return to his homeland, where he arrived in time to receive his official promotion to Kapitän-zur-See by the Admiralty. He was appointed chief of the German Marine Department, and in this position was able to wield a tremendous influence upon the disillusioned war leaders.

Von Müller officially retired from the navy on January 11, 1919. But instead of resting, in order to take care of his worsening lung inflammation, he immediately plunged into politics, thus keeping his promise to the British that he would help rebuild a new Germany, so necessary to the stability of Europe. He rapidly emerged as one of the real leaders of the people's revolt in Germany, becoming one of the main organizers of the German National People's Party – one of the many new political groups seeking control of the republic, now slowly being re-formed from the shambles of the Imperial collapse. It was a good party: perhaps the best political group in Germany,

and von Müller worked for it tirelessly, firmly believing it offered the most hopeful cure for the ills of post-war Germany.

In the spring of 1920, while on one of his field trips to the Harz Forest district, he met the blonde and vivacious Jutta von Hanstein, whose family were prominent in the Prussian province of Saxony. She herself came from Halberstadt. At the time of her meeting with von Müller she was already active in the National People's Party, which immediately gave them a great deal in common.

Soon they were working together on the political problems of their country, and it was not long before they fell in love. A few days before Christmas, 1920, they were quietly married, with von Müller's sister Elfrida as a witness to the ceremony. Following their wedding they continued their speaking tours and organizational work, but von Müller, happy in his marriage and absorbed in his political activities, continued to ignore his steadily failing health.

Jutta knew that he was working too long and too hard, and his friends also became aware of his increasing pallor and recurrent fits of coughing; the fatigue he suffered after one of his public speeches. But no one, not even his wife, could persuade him to slow down or to take better care of his health. His condition steadily deteriorated; he would often break into cold sweats that would leave him ill and shaking for hours at a time and he began to suffer frequent bouts of pneumonia. Finally his heart began to fail him, and on March 11, 1923, he died in Jutta's arms, exhausted by a combination of lung trouble and heart disease.

He was buried with full military honours, one of the few men in history to be praised equally by friend and foe. One man not present at his funeral was his Nemesis, Captain John Glossop, although many English and French officers came to pay their final respects.

He was buried in Blankenburg Cemetery. His gravestone was a massive granite boulder, topped by a cross of the same stone, reaching toward the sky from amid a grotto of rocks and ferns and a cluster of pine trees. On the lower half of the stone, in bold, black letters, were inscribed the following words:

Karl von Müller
Kapitän-zur-See
Kommandant S.M.S. *Emden*

Three years later, Glossop died, and was buried with full naval honours in the ancient churchyard of England's Bothenhampton Parish Church. Thus closed a distinguished career for which he had received very little credit. In mentioning his death, London newspapers referred casually to the fact that he had been commander of the *Sydney* when the *Emden* had been sunk.

The glory of that famous naval battle was to remain von Müller's – in both victory and defeat. As one English periodical noted in his obituary: "His sporting behaviour rather appealed to the hearts of the British people."

It certainly had been a strange kind of war.

Postscript

The German Government kept its promise to the city of Emden. A new cruiser with her proud name was launched, and her former torpedo officer, Witthoef, commanded her on the world cruise which followed. At Batavia, he wirelessed the Cocos Islands and asked if the new *Emden* and her crew would be welcome. He was told that they would. LaNauze was now the superintendent at Direction Island. The cruiser remained at the Cocos for several days, and on departing her crew deposited a wreath near North Keeling Island. The surf was still pounding there as furiously as ever, but all vestiges of the famous *Emden* had long since disappeared.

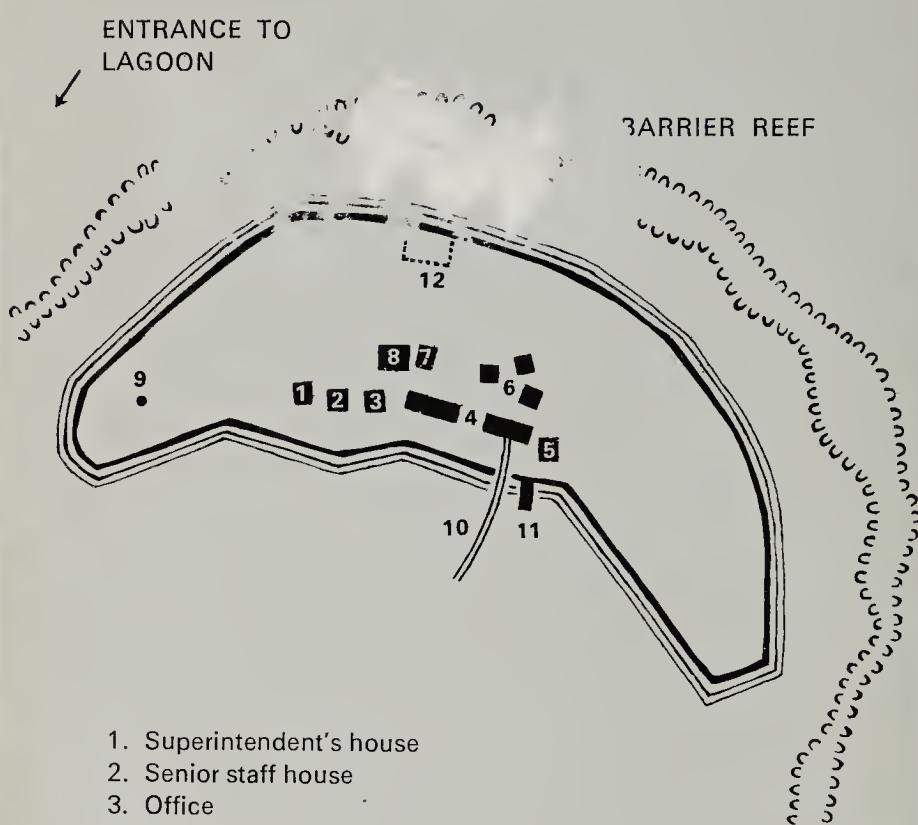
Es Ist Vorbei

It took the German Navy almost twenty-seven years to the day, and another war, to avenge the destruction of the *Emden*. It reaped this revenge under very strange circumstances.

On November 19, 1941, the German raider *Kormoran*, disguised as a harmless merchantman, met and engaged the pride of the Royal Australian Navy, H.M.A.S. *Sydney*, which had of course been named after the famous cruiser under Glossop's command during the First World War. In an action which took place not far from the Cocos Islands (as distances are measured in this area of the world) both ships received mortal wounds. When last seen, the mighty *Sydney* was disappearing over the horizon of the Indian Ocean, enveloped in flames from stem to stern. Nothing was ever seen or heard of her again, and she carried 645 men to their doom.

As for the crew of the sinking *Kormoran*, they were rescued at the last minute by another vessel which happened to be passing. It was a sailing ship which bore a striking resemblance to the white schooner *Ayesha* which had sailed these seas so many years before. Arriving at this most opportune moment it scooped up the survivors and carried them to safety.

DIRECTION ISLAND



1. Superintendent's house
2. Senior staff house
3. Office
4. Staff quarters
5. Engine Shed
6. Stores
7. Billiard room
8. Tennis court
9. Flagpole
10. Telegraph cables
11. Jetty
12. Coolie lines

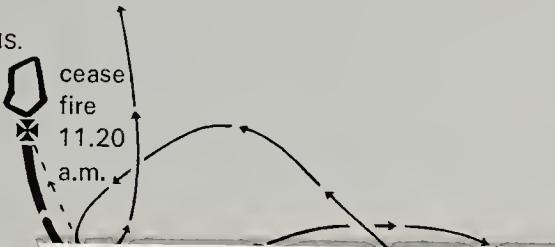




0 1164 0023987 1

← → COURSE OF S.M.S. EMDEN
← → COURSE OF H.M.A.S. SYDNEY

NORTH
KEELING IS.
Sydney shells
the beached
Emden



VA515 .E5M3

McClement, Fred
Guns in paradise

RECON

127993

HORSBOE

C

